Translation and/as Empathy: Mapping Translation Shifts in 9/11 Fiction

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to establish an unprecedented empathic approach to the comparative analysis of 9/11 fiction in translation. The central tenet of this study is that translation – as a creative, subversive and disarming force – is a fundamentally empathic process. As parallel and reciprocal works of fiction, 9/11 novels and their translations are not only bound by the centrifugal force of the traumatic event at their centres, but perform, expand and subvert the same empathic structures and interactions on which they are founded. By foregrounding an innovative comparison of translation shifts, this thesis will map the potential for interactivity and reciprocity across the translation divide, and reinstate the translated text as a rich terrain for textual analysis.

This thesis will focus on four key works of fiction and their French translations: *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* (Don DeLillo)*, The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* (Amy Waldman), *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* (John Updike), and *The Zero* and *Le Zéro* (Jess Walter). This topographical overview of 9/11 fiction offers a deliberately fragmentary and episodic account of a genre that is unsettled in translation, with a view to capturing, and testing the limits of, the vast temporal, empathic and imaginative networks in which the texts and their translations participate. By drawing complex empathic maps of 9/11 fiction and their translations, this thesis will emphasise the value of translation shifts as an innovative and critical tool for literary analysis. It seeks to expand the limits of contemporary literary translation approaches to accommodate dynamic, empathic forms of analysis and textual modes of comparison, where both source and target texts are indivisible from the empathically-unsettled terrains in which they are forged.

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At the Boundaries of 9/11 Fiction and Literary Translation

Some sixteen years on from the September 11th attacks, the future for 9/11 fiction is uncertain, as the intensity and boundless aftermath of the event seems, at least in terms of literary production, to be approaching its end. In the wake of the traumatic event, Richard Gray reiterated that 'some kind of alteration of imaginative structures [was] required to register the contemporary crisis', articulating a transnational and expansive vision for the genre.[1] Yet while literary translation offers an innovative reframing of these extraterritorial ambitions, no study of 9/11 fiction in translation exists, and translation shifts continue to be neglected as an insightful and critical tool for literary analysis. This thesis seeks to establish an unprecedented imaginative structure for the comparative study of 9/11 fiction in translation. As a fundamentally empathic process, translation expands the boundaries of the traumatised city through the creation of a reciprocal and interactive translated text: an empathic double that echoes and unsettles the same empathic structures on which the novels are founded. By drawing complex empathic maps of 9/11 fiction and their translations, this thesis will stage an empathic unsettling of the genre in translation, and expand the limits of contemporary literary translation approaches to accommodate dynamic, empathic forms of analysis and textual modes of comparison.

Both 9/11 fiction and contemporary translation theory are defined by their territorial gaze: as the first looks outwards, to transnational, global perspectives on the traumatic event, translation studies has become increasingly inward-looking and reliant on recycling its own critical models and paradigms. Literary translation studies faces the greatest risk of stagnation, and finds itself being remade as a study of the translator and of the contexts and motivations to which contemporary translation is seen as inexorably bound. This thesis proposes a break from such models and a recentering of the texts, whether original or translations, as a rich terrain for contemporary study. This is by no means a retreat or a return to source-oriented models for translation, but a new perspective on how texts and translation might be relocated as parallel, interactive texts, connected empathically across the translation divide. This thesis upholds translation as a

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[1] Richard Gray, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis', *American Literary History*, 21.1 (2009), 128-148, <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/257852/pdf> (p.134).

fundamentally empathic process, and in the connection between text and translation as one of reciprocity, exchange and empathic momentum. As such, this thesis is embedded in literature: in the rich nuances, reverberations and shifts that mark the divergences and commonalities of texts and translations. This research does not seek to extend or replicate the perspective and polarising tendencies of established translation theories and strategies, or to impose contextual or reception-led frameworks of interpretation on. Instead, this thesis begins with translation shifts, and traces the empathic trajectories of 9/11 fiction, both as a genre of American fiction and of translation: categories that, in this thesis, are collaborative equals, rather than separate or devolved entities.

This introduction will outline the three core principles of this study – 9/11 fiction, translation theory and empathy – and seeks to illustrate how these three seemingly disparate concepts converge to create a unique imaginative and comparative approach to the analysis of 9/11 fiction in translation. This thesis will begin with the event at its centre – 9/11 – as a force for literary creation and dilation, and as the staging ground for the comparative study of empathic encounters in translation.

Us, Them and the Mechanics of Alterity

Discourses on 9/11 – whether political, ideological, literary or critical – crystallise around two distinct concepts: those of alterity and of incommensurability. 9/11 fiction is consistently articulated in these terms: by literary scholars, for whom 9/11 novels are seen to echo, though rarely problematise, the inherent conflict and culpability found in wider commentaries on the attacks, and by novelists, grappling with notions of incommensurability and the lethargy of fiction writing in response to real-time, televised disaster. A raft of studies on 9/11 fiction have hinged on the extent to which 9/11 novels might be judged as adequate responses to the polarising narratives of alterity and conflict that still remain definitive of the divisive force of the traumatic event. 9/11 fiction has largely been found wanting by literary scholars, almost entirely in response to its perceived failure to escape the short-sighted, introspective and ultimately selfish nature of individual trauma. Yet aside from the external pressures or expectations exerted on the works, alterity and incommensurability are incredibly problematic for comparative studies of 9/11 texts and translations. Such discourses compound binary conceptualisations of source and target texts as works defined by their difference, and give rise to notions of allegiance, where translation, framed as a means of enacting

difference, is aligned with the otherness of the terrorist threat in American fiction. In addition, the prevalence of narratives of incommensurability narrows the contextual and interpretive frame in which translated texts are permitted to function, limiting their status to that of derivative works, and their analysis to a study of reception. Forms of alterity, by definition, undermine the reciprocal and parallel study of literature pursued in this study, while narratives of incommensurability drive the assimilation of 9/11 into wider socio-political discourses on trauma via literary means. In short, such discourses cast 9/11 fiction as a responsive, commentary genre, that is evaluated on how far each novel is seen to respond to alterity and incommensurability in prescribed terms.

Tracing the textual manifestations of such narratives is both counterproductive and counter-intuitive to the core aims of this study. This thesis does not intend to extrapolate literary analysis to theorise on the function or status of trauma, or vice-versa. 9/11, as a traumatic event in whatever terms or theoretical frameworks, irrefutably pre-exists 9/11 fiction writing in any target language, regardless of source or target culture. Therefore, any attempt to situate 9/11 literature in cultural or reception-led contexts must accept that the novel will always come up against narratives and responses formed in the immediate aftermath of the visual, televised, live event. If such a statement is to be accepted as fact, then so too must 9/11 fiction and translation be considered as derivative, subsidiary works, bound by a pre-established reality – or at least by the appearance of reality constructed through visual media – regardless of cultural or linguistic context. Liberating 9/11 texts and translations from these contextually-defined perspectives is one of the driving forces behind the decision to forgo theories of translatorial agency and cultural translation practices in this thesis. Only through a methodological commitment to the source and target texts as literary constructions, and not beyond, is it possible to begin to subvert context and reception-led approaches to contemporary fiction. As such, this study does not seek to account for the influence or significance of cultural and contextual factors on the reception of 9/11, whether as visual or literary event. Just as questions surrounding alterity and incommensurability serve to constrain 9/11 novels through the imposition of wider discourses, so too would comparative literary studies suffer from a restrictive form of simplification if they were to be understood only as evidence for cultural difference, traumatic assimilation and linguistic transfer.

In contrast to the comparative approach of this thesis, which prioritises reciprocity and parity across source and target texts, alterity can be aligned most clearly with the

divisive forces of distinction and categorisation. With alterity comes the binary construction of Self and Other, most notably in the standardisation of polarising language in scholarly literature on 9/11 fiction. As a result, 9/11 has acquired the status of a 'catastrophic event' in literature, '[that saw] our world, parts of our world, crumbled into theirs'.[4] The conflict is consistently stated in the clearest, most oppositional of terms: 'the attack that brought down the World Trade Centre constructed a higher wall that separates Self from Other', perpetuating the binaries of 'civilized and savage, town and wilderness, "them" and "us"'.[5] It is telling that these quotations, though reminiscent of the political rhetoric of the Bush era, are all taken from critical literature on 9/11 fiction, where the threat of the Other is consistently constructed as 'omnipresent and non-localized'.[6] What is particularly problematic in the use of this lexicon is that it seems largely derived from external discourses and expectations of 9/11 literature, rather than being extrapolated from the texts themselves. The logic is seemingly sound: 9/11 opens a vast chasm between "Us and Them" to which literature must respond, and which therefore is best read as a form of 'self-conscious political allegory, [placed] to grapple with the perception of historical rupture and decay induced by 9/11.'[7] Alarmingly, this same divisive rhetoric bleeds into polemic claims for what '9/11 literature ought to be doing'.[8] Don DeLillo famously claimed fiction writing as the 'counternarrative' to the hijacking of expression at the hands of terrorist insurgents: a binarism recognised by literary scholar Kristiaan Versluys as a reactionary form of 'counterviolence'.[9] Fiction writing in the post-9/11 era is, at least as far as critical literature is concerned, the product of the polarised political climate from which it emerges, and is therefore bound to enact and perform such differences if it is to be both authentic and assimilable as a form of pseudo-activism and historical narrative.

    If the previous sentence reads as a prescriptive statement of expectations, it does so in attempting to capture the tone of critical reactions to 9/11 fiction, and account for

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[4] Don DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future', *Harper's Magazine,* December 2001.

[5] Maha Said, 'The Face of the Enemy: Arab-American Writing Post-9/11', *Studies in the Humanities,* 30 (2003), 200–217 (p.202).

[6] Richard Gray, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis', *American Literary History*, 21.1 (2009), 128-148 <http://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajn061> (p.135).

[7] Elizabeth S. Anker, 'Allegories of Falling and the 9/11 Novel', *American Literary History,* 23 (Fall 2011), 463-482 <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/449331> (p.463).

[8] John N. Duvall and Robert P. Marzec, 'Narrating 9/11', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 57.3 (Fall 2011), 381-400 < https://muse.jhu.edu/article/450767/pdf> (p.384).

[9] Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel'* (New York: Columbia University Press), p.17.

the sense of disappointment felt by many of those writing on the genre's contributions to post-9/11 discourses on trauma and terror. Retrospective collections on 9/11 fiction consistently conceptualise the September 11th attacks as a watershed moment: for culture, politics and, crucially, literary production. Existing novelistic structures and devices were considered ineffective and irrelevant by many. In line with the emerging trend of prescriptivity in critical readings of 9/11 fiction, Elizabeth Anker underlined what she saw as the need for 9/11 literature to reject engagement with 'the American predicament through recurrent plot devices and motifs that both capture the domestic in jeopardy and indict narcissistic American self-reference'.[10] Though adopting the same problematic references to the American nation as narratives on exceptionalism, victimhood and incommensurability – an issue to be discussed in due course – what is particularly striking in Anker's statement is the feeling that American genres of literature were largely impotent in the wake of incommensurable trauma. The result was an increasingly evaluative reading of 9/11 fiction, and the creation of prescriptive guidelines and criteria for how novelists ought to tackle alterity and incommensurability, with the loudest calls in favour of a transnational gaze that looks out beyond the domestic confines of the trauma.[11] Once more, these expectations and evaluations of 9/11 fiction are inexorably bound up in wider notions of how the texts might decipher the cultural, political and historical repercussions of the attacks: a functional and contextual form of interpretation not dissimilar to prevailing models for literary translation analysis.

Of the texts in this thesis, the work of DeLillo and Updike has received the harshest criticism: the first for failing to reach beyond the insularity of the domestic realm, the latter for indulging in stereotypical representations of the subjectivity of the terrorist Other.[12] In both cases, the subtext is all too clear: that both *Falling Man* and *Terrorist* are understood in terms of their engagement with alterity, and ultimately judged

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[10] Elizabeth S. Anker, 'Allegories of Falling and the 9/11 Novel', p.464.

[11] These works are largely conceived in response to Joseph O'Neill's post-9/11 novel, *Netherland,* which has been consistently lauded as the first 9/11 novel to escape the domestic confines that have come to typify the genre for an array for literary critics. *Netherland* is seen as a kind of blue-print for future 9/11 fiction writing, and its transnational and exterritorial ambitions have often been extrapolated to speak to the genre as a whole. For examples of this transition, see: Karolina Golimowska, 'Cricket as a Cure: Post-9/11 Urban Trauma and Displacement in Joseph O'Neill's Novel Netherland', *Journal of American Culture*, 36 (2013), 230-236, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jacc.12027>; Bimbisar Irom, 'Towards a Worldly Post-9/11 American Novel: Transnational Disjunctures in Joseph O'Neill's Netherland', *Journal Of Transnational American Studies*, 7.1(2016), 1-23; Sarah L. Wasserman, 'Looking Away from 9/11: The Optics of Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*', *Contemporary Literature*, 55.2 (2014), 249-269, <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1353/cli.2014.0017>.

[12] Richard Gray, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2011); Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue*, p.16.

on their failure to subvert such binaries as per the expectations, and perceived moral obligations, articulated in the critical literature. Fiction writing was expected to perform its own kind of translation, converting trauma into 'explanatory narratives, not simply as a means for countering the trauma, but as a means for refusing incommensurability, prompting attempts to place 9/11 into an historical framework.'[13] Once more, the novel is tasked with narrating trauma while rejecting the very exceptionalism from which it is expected to emerge as a salient and privileged viewpoint, and with providing a response to a conflict that might still be assimilated into mainstream narratives. Such a balance was seemingly to be struck under prescribed conditions, where any subversion of the expectations of literary scholars, as representatives of the cultural and ethical pressures on fiction writing, was to be met with disappointment.[14]

A Disorder Peculiar to the Country: Incommensurability and exceptionalism

Synonymous with the binary systems of opposition and conflict is the well-documented, and almost definitive, status of the traumatic event as incommensurable in scale and impact.[15] 'The idea that 9/11 was a moment when "everything changed" quickly became established in official discourse' and unprecedented trauma soon became indicative of a sense of irreversible political, historical and cultural rupture: the significance of the temporality and punctuation of the date compounded by the nomenclature of the event itself.[16] This unwavering belief in 9/11 as a watershed moment in contemporary history rarely appears without accompanying narratives on exceptionalism, establishing the September 11th attacks as unequivocally American: 'the attack struck at the very heart of the American psyche, since it was an assault on one of the very iconic references around which an American way of life has been formulated.

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[13] Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn, *Literature after 9/11* (New York, London: Routledge, 2010), p.3.

[14] Several critics have focused on the failures of 9/11 fiction from the perspective of the genre's alleged inability to resist or engage with wider socio-political and contextual narratives. Notable examples include: Sonia Baelo-Allué, '9/11 and the Psychic Trauma Novel: Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*', *Atlantis*, 34.1(2012), 63-80 <www.jstor.org/stable/43486021>; Richard Gray, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis', *American Literary History,* 21.1 (2009), 128-148 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajn061>; and Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Gray', *American Literary History*, 21.1 (2009), 152-158.

[15] The subheading for this section – 'A Disorder Peculiar to the Country' – is the title of Ken Kalfus' contribution to 9/11 fiction, published in 2006. The title of the novel in translation captures the prevalence of narratives of incommensurability quite neatly: *Un désordre américain.* For reference: Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

[16] David Holloway, *9/11 and the War on Terror* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p.4.

The attack on the building was equally an attack on American national identity.'[17] This same nationalistic sentiment is echoed in the novels themselves. In *The Submission*, one character claims that:

> You couldn't call yourself an American if you hadn't, in solidarity, watched your fellow Americans being pulverized, yet what kind of American did watching create? A traumatized victim? A charged-up avenger? A queasy voyeur? Paul, and he suspected many Americans, harboured all of these protagonists.[18]

While insecurities, and a certain degree of embarrassment and guilt, accompany such proclamations, the definition of the event as an American trauma does not impede narratives of incommensurability as one might expect. Instead, fiction writing – as the command of the imagined and unimaginable – was deemed capable and morally obligated to cut through the sense that 9/11 could not be contained by conventional forms of explanation. As Arin Keeble notes, there was a 'phenomenal anticipation that quickly built for the literary representation of 9/11: these novels were written under the pressure of an expectation that literature would provide answers and give meaning to a newly uncertain world'.[19] Indeed, the majority of collective studies of 9/11 fiction would be led by the conviction that 'literature expresses what remains unpresentable about 9/11', and the expectation that fiction writing might facilitate the assimilation of 9/11 into the very structures that its unprecedented violence subverted, by imagining the 'unimaginable'.[20]

These expectations converge on a common accusation: that 9/11 novels stage a retreat 'from politics to domesticity'.[21] Such criticism – articulated most emphatically by critic Richard Gray, but echoed in responses from Pankaj Mishra, Michael Rothberg, and David Holloway – finds fault in the tendency of 9/11 fiction towards representing the domestic and the individual, and its failure to escape the binaries of Self and Other that uphold introverted, American perspectives on the trauma.[22] 9/11 fiction is expected at once to attest to the scale and impact of the disaster, yet resist political and social narratives on its polarising and exceptionalist qualities. Though several studies have sought to overthrow such readings, all tend to fall back on the assumption that alterity and incommensurability offer narrative structures through which 9/11 novels must be read

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[17] Neil Leach, '9/11', *Diacritics*, 33.3/4 (2003), 75-92 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/dia.2006.0010>
[18] Amy Waldman, *The Submission* (London: William Heinemann, 2011), p.13.
[19] Arin Keeble, *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2014), p.6.
[20] Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn, *Literature after 9/11*, p.2.
[21] John N. Duvall and Robert P. Marzec, 'Narrating 9/11', p.384.
[22] Pankaj Mishra, 'The End of Innocence', *Guardian.* 19 May 2007; Michael Rothberg, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds'; and David Holloway, *9/11 and the War on Terror.*

and interpreted, as contextual discourses with which the genre is explicitly engaged.[23] O'Gorman in particular must be applauded for his illustration of how 9/11 novels subvert and transcend the limitations of binary understandings of alterity and difference, and for expanding the genre of 9/11 fiction to consider texts as 'constellational' works that resist the form of chronological and 'generic categorisation' attempted elsewhere.[24] However, in contrast to O'Gorman's work, the empathy-led analysis of texts and translations pursued in this thesis will not be framed as an attempt to subvert external narratives on alterity and difference, or to establish new terms and categorisations of identity that resist binary frames of reference. Instead, this study treads new ground by focusing on interactions between source and target texts via translation, rather than between texts and their external environments as a mode of political or discursive engagement with the wider context from which the novels emerge.

Incommensurability and exceptionalism depend on victimhood occupying a position of privilege above all other experiences of trauma. However, this privilege constitutes a hierarchy of traumatic experience that is wholly incompatible with the empathic ethos of this study. In such narratives, first-hand experiences of trauma, and the resulting status of 'victim' that one subsequently acquires, are considered beyond reproach and are largely inaccessible to those outside of the traumatic event. Therefore, not only is the event unprecedented, but so too are the narratives of trauma, grief and suffering that emerge from the rubble. Such a perspective not only facilitates the binary division of Self and Other as one of victims and perpetrators, but recasts empathy as a gatekeeping device, whereby access to the upper echelons of traumatic experience is reserved for victims of the trauma itself. Any attempt at understanding this coveted mode of experience via empathic means therefore flirts with appropriation and risks speaking for the Other: a phenomenon described elsewhere as vicarious empathy.[25] Yet this study seeks to move away from replicating the binaries of source/target and Self/Other, and

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[23] Georgiana Banita, *Plotting Justice: Narrative Ethics and Literary Culture After 9/11* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Daniel O'Gorman, *Fictions of the War on Terror: Difference and the Transnational 9/11 Nove*l (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); *Radical Planes? 9/11 and Patterns of Continuity*, ed. by Dunja M. Mohr and Birgit Däwes, (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Martin Randall, *9/11 and the Literature of Terror* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).
[24] Daniel O'Gorman, *Fictions of the War on Terror: Difference and the Transnational 9/11 Novel* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.ix. For works identifying a category of 'early 9/11 novels', see: David Holloway, *9/11 and the War on Terror*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) and Ewa Kowal, *The "image-event" in the early post-9/11 novel: literary representations of terror after September 11, 2001*, (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2012). Cambridge University Press ebook.
[25] Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma, Absence, Loss', *Critical Inquiry,* 25.4 (1999), 696-727, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344100>, (p.699).

instead hopes to map empathic experience as a spectrum of interactions and outcomes. By treating the target text as a relative empathic position from its source, a translation shift analysis aims to identify where these interactions result in empathic disturbances and unsettlements, both within and across texts. While characters within the worlds of each text might enact empathic hierarchies and axes, and articulate degrees of empathic difference, this study seeks to establish a topographical view of empathy as a translational phenomenon that resists linear and evaluative measures of empathic engagement.

The pervasive reach of narratives on alterity and incommensurability in 9/11 fiction is testament to the need for new literary studies that open up the genre to perspectives beyond the realm of context and reception. Such discourses on difference and conflict, and the expectations they impose upon 9/11 texts even before their translation, are not only restrictive, but also undermine the value of close reading and literary comparison as text-oriented forms of analysis. The integral difference and binary construction of alterity is echoed in conventional translation theories concerning the apparent ethical obligations of the translator to expose cultural difference and deficit, in one of the many empathic 'doubles' observed in this thesis. The challenge for any comparative study of text and translation is to resist such binary structures, and instead prioritise critical perspectives that are methodologically and ideologically rooted in the possibility of reciprocity across the translation divide. The aim is not to dismantle narratives on incommensurability and the Self/Other divide, since such discourses are inextricable from cultural context, reception and narrative constructions on a scale far beyond that of the literary text. To intervene in such cultural and social constructions of difference, and in discourses on the perceived impact and function of the 9/11 novel as social commentary, would once again undermine the focus of this study on the textual interactions of texts and translations. While the process of empathic and intertextual mapping championed in this thesis could well be extended to account for the extra-textual, as the outermost ripples and resonances of the traumatic event, the focus of this study is on establishing a new terrain in which source and target texts might interact.

It is worth restating that this study is not a recovery of the textual manifestations of trauma. If 9/11 is accepted and established as a point of origin beyond the reach of the texts, it is possible to shift focus onto how empathic interactions and positions are established and navigated within a shared, traumatised terrain. The key is to establish an epicentre that is at once beyond the temporal, spatial or perspectival limits that construct

and maintain the realities of each text, and which enables a severance of text and context, in line with the wider aims of this study. As is inevitable with a genre such as 9/11 fiction, there will be echoes, insecurities and preoccupations that speak to wider, extra-textual discourses on the traumatic event, but whether, or how far, these are indicative of traumatic experience and recovery is irrelevant to the discussion at hand. To clarify, although translation shifts both capture and crystallise representations of temporality, these temporal constructions are not symptomatic of trauma per se. Instead, these shifts provide the grounds for establishing empathic positions – both in proximity to the centrifugal traumatic event and relative to other empathic positions in the text – in the aftermath of 9/11. The difference is a subtle one, but it ensures that this study remains true to its comparative aims, rather than falling back on attributing translation shifts to socially-constructed narratives that are imposed on the texts via reception, or to translation strategies that strategically pursue functionalist representations of trauma.[26] Therefore, it is hoped that such a shift in perspective has the potential to unveil new, coherent aspects across the literary genre of 9/11 fiction that might be analysed and connected beyond their perceived status as traumatic repercussions. The potential success of such a study is twofold, and would offer an alternative to the imposition of restrictive discourses that perpetuate and uphold notions of alterity and exceptionalism, as well as those that prioritise context-led and socio-political readings of 9/11 fiction.

Translation theory

Contemporary movements in translation studies are increasingly invested in the exterior worlds of literary texts, and bound by the expectation that literature, and particularly translated literature, must intervene in the cultures and paradigms in which it is produced. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the contemporary translation theories of the cultural and activist turns, where alterity and opposition take centre-stage in the strategies and target-oriented approaches that dominate the field. A comparative study of 9/11 fiction therefore finds itself under siege from numerous external forces and agents:

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[26] I refer here to translation strategies that deliberately seek to translate a text in such a way that the traumatic event performs an intended function. This is observed most clearly in studies from the cultural turn in translation studies, where postcolonial translation strategies seek to recast such events in a way that subverts colonial hierarchies of power, or which emphasises the experience of minoritised ethnic or religious communities that might find a new voice or role in the translated text, thus subverting the hierarchies upheld in the ST. In the case of 9/11 fiction, this might refer to the representation of the cultural or religious origins of terrorist perpetrators, to the communities ostracised in the wake of the attacks, or in recognising incommensurability and attempting to reframe the trauma in non-nationalistic terms.

authorial, translatorial, contextual and receptive in nature. The challenge for this study, then, is to find new ground and to open up a terrain for comparison and analysis that is not bound by these invasive structures. Such a task is perhaps more easily achieved in the field of literary studies, where divergence and innovation are largely encouraged and accommodated. In contrast, literary translation studies is increasingly confined by the theories and systemised approaches that are seen to define its scholarly status and disciplinarity. Even in its widest sense, translation studies is undeniably defined by notions of disparity – between languages, cultures, and between source and target texts – and the reciprocity at the methodological and ideological core of this comparative thesis is therefore at odds with the drivers of much contemporary translation theory. Yet rather than seeking to replace notions of disparity with a reconceptualisation of source and target texts as interactive, parallel works, much contemporary work in translation studies would see power redistributed and placed into the hands of translators and their works. This thesis does not subscribe to the view that progress lies in the repetitive working over and extrapolation of target-oriented forms of analysis, or with the agents of translatorial production. Instead, it advocates a return to the literary, and aims to offer an innovative perspective on how texts and translation might interact as empathic and textual agents.

One of the key theoretical concepts in contemporary translation studies, against which this comparative study offers a form of resistance and critique, is that of translator agency. Having gained considerable ground in the last two decades, translator agency is currently one of the greatest movements in contemporary work on translation.[27] The scope of such works is vast, encompassing diverse concepts such as translatorial agency and choice, the influence of external pressures from professionals and patronage, the habitus of the translator, and the function of the translator as contextual and sociological filter and mediator.[28] Yet, to my mind, translator agency undermines studies in literary translation that seek to understand the relationship between texts and translations beyond their contextual statuses and functions. It does so by privileging a plethora of contextual and sociological factors that are external to source and target texts as literary works of

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[27] Ben van Wyke. 'Ethics and translation', in *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 1*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2010), pp. 111-115 (p.112); *The Sociological Turn in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, ed. Claudia V. Angelelli (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2014), p.1; Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 2008), p.12.
[28] Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*, (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007)*; Agents of Translation*, ed. by John Milton and Paul Fadio Bandia, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2009).

fiction, and risks reducing the translation process to one of individual choice, social influence or professional necessity. Nevertheless, it is important to trace the development and influence of such concepts within the field of translation studies, and to consider how 9/11 fiction in translation – as a distinctly contemporary literary genre – might subvert discrete frameworks for translatorial agency.

Generally speaking, translator agency, as it exists as a contemporary discipline within the field of Translation Studies, can be divided into two key categories: those works that focus on the translator as a distinct individual, as a conscious, intervening force in the translation of source texts; and those that attempt to account for the translator as a mediatory position within a wider sociological, and increasingly socio-political, context.[29] The latter body of work owes much to the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the concept of habitus: a line of enquiry that, somewhat conveniently from my perspective, allows translation scholars to account for both the conscious and unconscious impact of translators as products of their social realms, operating within tenuously-defined national literary fields.[30] As individual forces of translatorial change, translators have been cast as agents for feminist intervention, resistance against postcolonial hierarchies, literary creativity and ethical decision-making.[31] Yet regardless of this heterogeneity in the intentions and ideological ambitions of the translator-agent, there is one consistent premise on which all concepts of translator agency hinge: the conceptualisation of positions that exist outside of the translation process as a vehicle for literary and textual transfer. By definition, the recognition and study of external agents in the translation process requires the temporal confines of translation study to be expanded to encompass conception and reception, where a translator is either bound by the

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[29] Outi Palopski, 'Limits of freedom: Agency, choice and constraints in the work of the translator', in *Agents of Translation*, ed. by John Milton and Paul Fadio Bandia, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2009), p.180.

[30] For more on the influence of Bourdieu's work on 'habitus' on Translation Studies, see: Jean-Marc Gouanvic, 'A Bourdieusian Theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances', *The Translator,* 11.2 (2005), 147-166, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2005.10799196>; Daniel Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status of the Translator's Habitus', *Target* 10.1 (1998), 1-39, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/target.10.1.02sim>. For a good example of how Bourdieu's theories are adapted and applied to literary translation, see: Sameh Hanna, *Bourdieu in Translation Studies: The Socio-cultural Dynamics of Shakespeare Translation in Egypt*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

[31] Barbara Godard, Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation', *Tessera*, 6 (1989),42-53, <http://tessera.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/tessera/article/view/23583> [accessed 5th May 2017]; *Post-colonial translation: Theory and* Practice, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, (London: Routledge, 1999); Beatriz Zeller, 'On translation and authorship', *Meta: Journal des traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 45.1 (2000), 134-139, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7202/004640ar>; Anthony Pym, 'Introduction: The Return to Ethics in Translation Studies', *The Translator*, 7.2 (2001), 129-138, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2001.10799096>

sociological and professional constraints from which a translation emerges, or by the function that the translated text is to perform in the target culture.[32] Studies of translator agency have generally favoured the latter, where translators are seen as cultural agents capable of addressing existing literary hierarchies or ideological disparities through the translation of under-represented, neglected or potentially subversive texts. Whether concerned with the employment of explicitly functionalist strategies or a wider engagement with the status of a target text in a given culture, such studies prioritise target-text reception: an element of translation practice that this study has deliberately bracketed out. However, such a persistent concern as reception cannot be so readily removed from conceptualisations of translator agency, which deal not only with intent, but with the repercussions of translatorial action as enacted by a target text.

The aspect of translatorial agency to which this thesis is perhaps most reactive and resistant is the notion of translators as distinct individuals, where their translations are viewed as the products of a myriad of personal and deliberate choices that can be traced back to a particular strategy, sociological function or stylistic intent. Michaela Wolf has done much to contribute to this area of scholarship, which upholds, as its central treatise, that:

> on the one hand, the act of translating, in all its various stages is undeniably carried out by individuals who belong to a social system; on the other, the translation phenomenon is inevitably implicated in social institutions, which greatly determine the selection, production and distribution of translation, and, as a result, the strategies adopted in the translation itself.[33]

To be clear, the intention of this comparative literary analysis is not to discredit studies of translational agency, or to undermine their relevance and contribution to contemporary translation studies. Instead, this study of 9/11 fiction in translation will test how far translation comparison holds up as an insightful and valid form of analysis where notions of agency and reception are bracketed out and removed from the equation. In addition, this thesis questions whether the binary relationships of distinction and difference, from

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[32] Anthony Pym, *On Translator Ethics: Principles for Mediation Between Cultures*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2012), p.100; Mary Snell-Hornby, *The Turns of Translation Studies*: *New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?'*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2006), p.49. These comments on translator context are allied with Gideon Toury's wider assertion that 'translations are facts of target cultures', whereby a target text is, upon its admittance into the target culture, inextricable from the culturally-specific characteristics by which its reception and status might be defined (see: Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing,1995), p.29).
[33] *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007), p.1.

which frameworks for translator agency are derived, are of relevance and consequence to 9/11 literature. Wolf's definition of translation as an inevitably contextually-bound process, carried out by individuals who each function in their own social contexts, arguably states the obvious. This thesis proposes that reducing studies of translation to a backwards reading of translator intent and action devalues the process of translation as an interactive and reciprocal tool for literary analysis and production, yet is not so blinkered as to suggest that source and target texts, and the translation process that connects the two, exist in a social vacuum. Yet while Pym sees translators performing a variety of context-bound functions - as messengers, professionals, interveners, missionaries, agents of cooperation - this study asks whether the translation process, as a series of interactive textual shifts, might function as an intervening empathic force that is unrestricted by notions of function, status or context. [34]

Translator agency

While this thesis advocates textual analysis, translatorial agency 'calls for a shift of emphasis from texts and context to the individual figures of translators as central objects of research, [aiming] to reconstruct the domain of socially conditioned subjectivity.'[35] Such figures are seen as 'social and cultural agents, actively participating in the production and reproduction of textual and discursive practices', possessing all the autonomy and creativity of authorial status.[36] However, this thesis resists these key attributes of translator agency – social influence, creativity, autonomy – and instead advocates a commitment to a reciprocal and empathic staging of texts and translations. Equally, it rejects notions of translation as the enactment of alterity: a process of differentiation and distanciation in which the translator is cast as an authoritative and intervening force. For in instances where the translator is granted agency and autonomy, translated texts are positioned on something of a precipice, 'between the individual translator's creativity, subjectivity and agency and the norms and constraints of the surrounding society…where each individual translator is differently positioned.' [37] Concessions to translator intent become all the more complex in discussions of translator

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[34] Anthony Pym, *On Translator Ethics*.

[35] *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007), pp.14-15.

[36] Moira Ingherilli, 'The Sociology of Bourdieu and the Construction of the 'Object' in Translation and Interpreting Studies', *The Translator*, 11.2 (2005), 125-146, < http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2005. 10799195>, (p.126).

[37] Outi Polopski, 'Limits of freedom', p.206

agency once it is accepted that 'such agents will always be pursuing their own interests, which may be conscious or unconscious': a view that extends to the translator as creative force, as well as social and contextual gatekeeper.[38] For a comparative literary study of 9/11 fiction, the risk in attributing agency to the translator is in perpetuating the hierarchical functions of narratives of incommensurability and alterity, and absorbing translations into the position of derivative Other.

The shift in theoretical discourses towards translation agency as a creative and authorial force marks a stark point of departure from the ideological stance taken up in this thesis, which explores translation shifts as potentially cohesive, narrative elements that respond not only to the source text, but to the structures of empathy that the translation simultaneously enacts and employs. Translation shifts are, for the purposes of this thesis, never attributed to translation intent or agency, whether consciously or unconsciously pursued. This comparative study proposes that such shifts expose moments of interaction and potential exchange across the translation divide. Such an approach not only rejects the view that these shifts serve as evidence of translator intervention and intent, but also rejects literary translation analysis as a form of recovery from which an impression of the translator might be salvaged. For example, in the case of domesticating and foreignising strategies:

> 'Discontinuities at the level of syntax, diction, or discourse allow the translation to be read as a translation, revealing the strategy at work in it, foreignizing a domesticating translation by showing where it departs from target-language cultural values, domesticating a foreignizing translation by showing where it depends on them'.[39]

What is perhaps most striking in Venuti's discussion of these discontinuities is the binary relationship into which they are subsumed: a difference that hinges on the positions and intent of the translator first, rather than the content of the world as textual entities. Indeed, rather than deferring to more explicit, though discrete, signs of the translator's presence through the inclusion of a preface, studies of translation as a form of recreation and authorship seek to reposition translators and authors as discursive agents, communicating

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[38] John Milton and Paul Bandia, 'Introduction: Agents of Translation and Translation Studies', in *Agents of Translation*, ed. by John Milton and Paul Fadio Bandia, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2009), p.10.
[39] Lawrence Venuti, 'Translation as cultural politics: Regimes of domestication in English', *Textual Practice*, 7.2 (1993), 208-223 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09502369308582166>, p.217.

via their fictional works.[40] In cases such as these, what this thesis terms 'translation shifts' are seen as 'entirely derived from the translator's creativity', rather than moments of reciprocity and narrative cohesion across source and target texts.[41]

> Crucial to discussions of translatorial agency is:

> [the] explicit situating of translation in historical and political contexts [where] translations were no longer to be seen as free-floating aesthetic artefacts generated by ahistorical figures in a timeless synchronicity of language but as works produced by historical figures in diachronic time.[42]

Once again, this seems a statement of clear fact: just as no text exists in, or emerges from, a cultural and social vacuum, so too must a translation be conceived and created within a context and climate.[43] What this thesis seeks to establish is how far a comparative analysis of text and translation, using translation shifts as points of interaction and possible reciprocity across the texts, might liberate contemporary genres of translated literature as direct products of their social context. Crucially, in such instances, this context is susceptible to the mediation and manipulation of a translator-agent who, somewhat paradoxically, deposes an author of apparently equal influence and agency. Therefore, rather than reading backwards from the target text with a view to establishing its difference as an indication of socially-influenced and deliberately reactive translation strategies, translation shifts allow a reciprocal reading of text and translation, where 'discontinuities' open texts and translations to the possibility of interaction and reciprocity as enabled by the translation process, not the translator-agent.

The most contentious aspect of translation agency, at least as far as this study is concerned, is the attribution of autonomy to the agents of the translation process: an autonomy that grants 'the freedom to stay within the perimeters marked by the constraints, or to challenge these constraints by trying to move beyond them.'[44] As such, the rise of translator studies has tended to attribute translation shifts to the activity of the translator, and as attempts either to conform or subvert source text parameters: another

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[40] Paolo Bezerra, 'Translation as creation', *Estudos Avançados,* 26.76 (2012),47-56, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/
S0103-40142012000300007>, p.47.

[41] Ibid., p.47.

[42] Michael Cronin, 'Double Take: Figuring the Other and the Politics of Translation', *Palimpsestes*, 17 (2005), 9-12 <https://palimpsestes.revues.org/777>, p.9.

[43] *Post-colonial translation: Theory and* Practice, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, (London: Routledge, 1999), p.2.

[44] *Translation, History, Culture: A Sourcebook*, ed. by André Lefevere, (London: Routledge, 1992), p.9.

binary conceptualisation of translation as a 'push and pull' scenario that neglects the potential for exchange and parity across the translation divide. Indeed, where agency is concerned, the translator is faced with a definitive choice, the two halves of which operate as mutually exclusive categories. For example, the translator may choose to conform to the parameters constructed by the target culture and source text, or use translatorial agency as a force for subverting and manipulating these existing constraints. However, once attributed to wider social and contextual factors, the two options remain polarised and irreconcilable within a single target text. More widely,

> [t]he use of duality – regardless of the strategy chosen – is most often concerned with the "faithfulness" of the translator or, to be more precise, with what the translator should be faithful to. This is where we find the pairs "formal correspondence/dynamic equivalence" (Nida e.g. 1964/2003) or "semantic translation /communicative translation" (Newmark e.g. 1991). Other binary oppositions apply more to the way the translation signifies the earlier text: "illusory translation /anti-illusory translation" (Lévy 1969/2011), "covert (hidden) translation /overt translation" (House 1977, 1997), and even hypertextual (ethnocentric) translation /literal (culturally open) translation (Berman e.g. 1994).[45]

What remains pervasive in each of these iterations is the presence of a binary construction: one that is bound by notions of fidelity to one side of the text-translation divide. For a comparative literary study of 9/11 fiction, these dichotomies are crystallised and brought into sharp focus by the overwhelming influence of alterity on all facets of post-9/11 literary production and reception. Moreover, in such a system, the potential for subversion is severely limited: translation is reduced to a largely reactive process, rather than a transgressive means of production.

In recent years, debates surrounding the agency of the translator have combined with those evaluative studies and vocabularies that seek to establish what 'good' translation is, and what translation strategies and intentions might be considered most worthy of commendation.[46] In much the same way as literary scholars have sought to establish prescriptive criteria for the social and political engagement of 9/11 fiction, so too have contemporary translation theorists taken on the task of establishing translators as forces for intervention and subversion: disturbing ethnocentric literary canons, seeking out underrepresented genres and literatures, and opening up target cultures to the

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[45] Pym, *On Translator Ethics*, p.15.
[46] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference,* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.11.

unknown and the foreign (the implication here is that such processes are somehow more wholesome or educative than conforming to existing literary or cultural hierarchies). The result of such a focus is that the majority of studies of translatorial agency seek to extol the benefits of translation, and view the gains secured in a target text as direct consequences of the deliberate strategies and interventions of the translator.

<u>Domestication and Foreignisation</u>

Venuti's highly popularised notions of domestication and foreignisation belong to this very model of binary conceptualisations of translation, upholding a dichotomy that, while liberating the translator-agent, greatly restricts the potential for the comparative study of literary texts and translations to contribute to contemporary translation discussions. Emerging alongside the range of "activist" translation strategies of the 1990s that saw translators take centre stage across a range of theoretical discussions, domestication and foreignisation attempt to navigate both social context and reception in strategic, agency-driven terms. Briefly, domestication facilitates target text reception and congruence with target-culture norms, 'inscribing [translated texts] with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to the specific domestic domain into which they are assimilated'.[47] Conversely, foreignising strategies seek to 'signify the difference of the foreign text…by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language.'[48] In both cases, the translator is established as instigator and enforcer, whether of a domesticating strategy, where the 'translator's work is an attempt at constantly making the linguistic and textual choices which most closely express the content and nuance of the original', thus facilitating target-text reception; or of foreignisation, implementing translation devices that emphasise the foreign origins of the translated text, resisting the expectations and literary norms of the target culture.[49] In any case, the assumption here is that the source text is indicative of the contextual environment from which it emerges, and that the translator has the power to act as gatekeeper for the transfer of the culturally-representative features of a literary text.

In more recent revisions of Venuti's theory, domestication and foreignisation do not operate so much as practical translation strategies, but as ethical approaches that seek to account for the reception, and intended status or potential function, of the translated

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[47] Ibid., p.67.
[48] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.340.
[49] Beatriz Zeller, 'On translation and authorship', p.135.

text in the target culture as accessed by target readers. Operating within this ethical framework, the translator is faced with a further choice, itself inexorably linked to reception and the assumption that a translator has the expansive knowledge required to traverse and mediate distinct cultural terrains: between 'minoritising' and 'resistant' translation strategies.[50] Rather than upholding the conventional dichotomy of domestication and foreignisation, minoritising and resistant approaches may be implemented by a translator regardless of their ethical stance. However, having said this, the introduction of evaluative vocabulary in response to what might constitute a 'good translation' arguably confirms the subtext that such a binary encourages: that foreignisation is considered the moral imperative, even obligation, of the translator.[51] What remains consistent in these iterations is the notion of translator agency and autonomy, and the function of the translator as an intentional force of intervention and disruption in the translation process.

Minoritising and resistant approaches both seek to resist dominant forms of domestication, by demonstrating the otherness of the translated text through the recognition and manipulation of minority forms in either language. A minoritising translation exposes the target language to difference, 'opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal.'[52] In comparison, resistant approaches are wilfully subversive and politicised in their intent, and seek to 'resist ethnocentric attitudes [by] defying target language expectations and stereotypes'[53]. One of the challenges of using such terminology is that Venuti seems determined to have his cake and eat it: articulating strategies for translation that seemingly function independently of the problematic binaries from which they emerge, and accounting for translator agency and choice as a consistently productive, culturally-engaged and potentially disruptive process. Scholars have been clear on where Venuti's framework is at its weakest, particularly concerning the shift from mutually exclusive, ethical approaches towards definitions of translator intent and activity that impose

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[50] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (Taylor & Francis US, 1998).

[51] Kjetil Myskja, 'Foreignisation and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics', *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 12.2, (2013), 1-23 <http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/njes/article/viewFile/2201/195> [accessed 10th April 2014, p.5.

[52] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation,* p.11.

[53] Kjetil Myskja, 'Foreignisation and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics'.

prescriptive evaluations on what the translator ought to be doing.[54] As Myjska acknowledges:

> The distinction between the terms foreignisation and minoritisation is not very clear, but they may perhaps be seen to cover the same reality from two different perspectives: a translation conducted along these lines is meant to be foreignising in that it marks the otherness of the translated text, but it is minoritising in that it uses minority forms within the target language and culture to create this text.[55]

Michael Cronin has rendered such discussions all the more complex, outlining the potential for domesticating strategies to operate as forms of cultural resistance, where 'advocacy of non-fluent, refractory, exoticising strategies, for example, can be seen as a bold act of cultural revolt and epistemological generosity in a major language, but for a minoritising language, fluent strategies may present the progressive key to their very survival.'[56] In this sense, Cronin offers a new perspective on Venuti's condemnation of translator invisibility as a barrier to discussing translation as an intercultural and potentially violent act, asking whether a domesticating translation might, in leading the reader to believe they are reading an 'authentic' literary text from their own cultural and literary domain, facilitate the dissemination and potential power of minority languages and literatures. More generally, translation scholars focusing on translator activism, including Mona Baker and Maria Tymoczko, have rejected Venuti's strategies: the former due to the prescriptive nature of Venuti's attempts to generalise on individual translator action, and the latter in response to what she considers to be Venuti's vague use of language in defining and describing the practical iterations of his imprecise definitions of translation approaches.[57] However, even amongst these criticisms, what is unwavering – and at odds with the ideological stance of this thesis – is the central position of agency and reception across this range of theoretical standpoints, in which agency is non-negotiable in conceptualisation of translation as choice (Baker), politicised action (Tymoczko) and politicised, intercultural mediation (Cronin).

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[54] Haidee Kruger, *Postcolonial Polysystems: The Production and Reception of Translated Children's Literature in South Africa* (John Benjamins Publishing, 2012), p.120.
[55] Kjetil Myskja, 'Foreignisation and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics', pp.4-5.
[56] Michael Cronin, 'The Cracked Looking Glass of Servants: Translation and Minority Languages in a Global Age', *The Translator*, 4.2 (1998), 145-163, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13556509.1998.10799017>, p.147.
[57] Mona Baker, 'Translation and Activism: Emerging Patterns of Narrative Community', *The Massachusetts Review*, 47.3 (2006), 462-484, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25091111>; Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*, (London: Routledge, 2006); Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*, (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007).

Rejection, regression, reciprocity: Comparative translation studies in context

This study does not aim to discredit theories of translatorial agency or studies that prioritise translation reception. However, it does seek to challenge the prevalence of such thinking in contemporary translation studies, with a view not only to illustrate the irrelevance of such models when applied to translations of 9/11 fiction, but also to evaluate the potential of comparative literary studies in translation that focus on textuality, rather than agency, reception or context. However, this is not to say that this study proposes a regression to models of Descriptive Translation Studies (henceforth DTS), against which the cultural and activist turns sought, and still seek, to revolt. Rather, I propose a comparative reading of text and translation that starts with translation shifts as the key indications of how and where these literary texts are most open to reciprocity and exchange. This form of analysis builds from the ground up, bracketing out any external agents in the translation process while also rejecting the impetus of DTS to create systemic and generalised models to describe translation processes. In methodological terms, this study marks a departure from both the descriptive approach of DTS scholars, despite their focus on the 'literal' aspects of translations, as well as the evaluative stance championed in the cultural turn, which seek to measure the impact secured by the translator, as cultural and contextual agent of translation, in the target domain.[58]

Though contrary to the core aims and ideological stance of this thesis, the categorisation of Toury's DTS methodology offers a neat illustration of how this study diverges from both descriptive and evaluative approaches to translation. For Toury, the potential function and position of a translation in a given target system determines the construction of the translated text, both in terms of the strategies implemented by the translator, and the textual and linguistic elements used in its construction. These strategies therefore signal the difference between the source and target text, and mark the derivation of the translation from the original, thus exposing how the two are connected across the translation divide.[59] Such an approach contradicts the focus of this study with each step.

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[58] Used in this context, 'literal' does not refer to the process of creating a translation that is a word-for-word rendering of a source text, but borrows Antoine Berman's definition of the term. For Berman, 'literal' means attached to the letter (of works). Labor on the letter in translation is more than the restitution of meaning. It is through this labor that translation, on the one hand, restores the particular signifying process of works (which is more than their meaning) and, on the other hand, transforms the translating language.' (Antoine Berman, Translation and the Trials of the Foreign, trans. by Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, p.297).

[59] Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies ─ and beyond*, (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing, 2012), p.7.

First, Toury's process of establishing the function of the target text is measured in terms of its 'acceptability' within the target culture and system, placing reception and functionality at the core of the analytical process.[60] Next, the comparison of source and target text segments (not dissimilar from my own comparison of translation shifts, in principle) seeks to demonstrate the efficacy of translation strategies, gauging equivalence and fidelity in order to discern how far a translation strategy may have encountered challenges or constraints within the source text. It is worth noting at this stage that the use of 'translation shifts' developed and implemented in this thesis occurred organically through the comparative analysis process, and is therefore wholly independent of Toury's use of the term. Indeed, Toury's application of the term is built on a belief that the function of the translation, relative to its original, is determined by the polarising difference between the texts. These are articulated as 'problem + solution' pairings and are indicative of how far translation strategies are successfully implemented to meet wider translation aims. Lastly, Toury's descriptive model proposes that such deficit-oriented analyses might be extrapolated to create a '[reconstructed] translation process', with wider implications for the study of a given language pairing: a process of generalisation to wider translation strategies and models that this comparative study rejects as its ultimate aim.[61]

To summarise, the 'cultural turn' in translation studies, as a precursor to contemporary studies of translatorial agency and activist translation practices, may be defined as the study of 'the text in its cultural environment', and of how translations interact with cultures and the wider contextual and literary paradigms to which a target-text is introduced.[62] These concepts marked a decided shift from the text-oriented studies of translations to consider translation as a cultural and political action, and as a point of cultural contact rather than textual transference. Yet despite the textual affiliations of descriptive translation approaches in comparison to their politically-engaged, culturally-sensitive descendants, this thesis is not aligned with either tradition. While this study of 9/11 fiction and translation does prioritise translation as a means of textual and literary intervention, it also upholds the belief that such an interaction is one of exchange and reciprocity that creates parallel and discursive texts of novels and their translations. It is

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[60] Ibid., p.37.
[61] Ibid., p.38.
[62] Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2016), p.198.

neither linear transfer, nor contact zone, but a process of doubling the text, creating an empathic position with which the original might engage in a meaningful, textually-realised dialogue. Such an approach offers no possibility of a generalisation of source and target language forms, and resists the influences of reception and function. To be clear, while the study of several 9/11 texts may, in the emergence of cohesive translation shifts, uncover previously unexplored genre conventions and characteristics, these will not be appropriated into a wider translation strategy: translation shifts are not considered symptomatic of translation approaches, or vice versa.

Translation shifts: The key to mapping texts and translations

The driving force of this thesis is the question of whether a parallel study of source and target texts – the translation process not only performing, but doubling their empathic connections – will reveal new insights into how these texts interact and contribute innovative readings of each. Within this model for reciprocity, a translation shift is never one-directional, but asks questions of the textual network from which it emerges while contributing to the construction and consolidation of target text narratives. These shifts may expose isolated changes across the texts, or be indicative of cumulative and cohesive narratives taking shape in the translated text. Moreover, the shifts considered in this study are those in which empathy is implicated as a form of affective transfer or translation: empathy as perspective, physical relocation, temporal dislocation, appropriation, possession, imagination, memory, competition, distance, proximity, intimacy and difference.

As it is used in this study, a 'translation shift' refers to any difference between the source and target texts that cannot be attributed to the constraints of linguistic difference, translation strategy or cultural specificity. For example, the inclusion of explanatory footnotes in the translated text or examples of explicitation (in the standard sense of a translation extending the explanation of a given term with additional content and information) of culturally-specific references do not constitute translation shifts. Similarly, this term does not refer to shifts that compensate for a lack of equivalence in the target language, even those that are related to empathy, empathic unsettlement and traumatic experience. One of the key aims to this thesis is to uncover how texts interact in the construction of narratives that emerge as a result of the relationship *between* source and target texts; a connection revealed through the occurrence of translation shifts. Rather

than attributing these divergent, or indeed cohesive, exchanges to translator creativity and agency, this comparative study seeks to understand how source and target texts interact to create meaning, and whether the analysis of these parallel narratives might offer an insight into the complex partnerships forged between novels and their translations. Such a study begins with the texts themselves, and therefore with translation shifts: not as products of a systematic translation strategy, or as decisions instigated by an individual translator, but as ciphers for a wider, empathic relationship between source and target texts, intrinsically bound by the translation process.

Bracketing out the translator in comparative translation studies

Put simply, for a study that prioritises textual comparison, words are essential. Therefore, it is important to pause on the suggestion that such forms of analysis stage a complete bracketing out of the translator as agent. The term 'bracketing out' is another deliberate attempt to align the lexicon of this thesis with its ideological aims, and to find a means of articulating translation processes in a way that resonates with the insecurities and preoccupations of the texts themselves. Again, this approach returns to reciprocity: between the source and target texts and the empathic positions explored in each, but also between these literary works and the language used to articulate their comparative relationship.

Firstly, this study does not intend to reinstate translator invisibility: a term already firmly established in literary translation theory, coined by Venuti himself. Invisibility requires a correlating binary state of visibility against which it might be contrasted, and the often tenuous divisions between the two states or visual terrains has significant ramifications for the translation of 9/11 texts.[63] In an effort to dispel such binary constructions – upheld in the language and structures of the translation theories outlined in this introduction – the translators of the target texts in this thesis cannot be considered as invisible figures. Moreover, in negotiating and locating trauma as a potentially empathic position, the translation of 9/11 fiction directly intervenes in the complex construction of visual and visible realms, thereby rendering 'invisibility' too loaded a term to apply to concepts of translatorial agency, or indeed to the translator as distinct identity or figure. Equally, critical discourses on 9/11 fiction offer no solution to the visible/invisible paradigm. While Don DeLillo's call for 9/11 literature to form a

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[63] This concept is explored in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

counternarrative serves as a rousing call to arms, it nevertheless constructs a polarised divide that echoes the same binarisms of translation theory, as well as those prevalent in reductive critical discussions of the Self/Other configuration on 9/11 texts.[64] While the translator has no place in this comparative study of 9/11 fiction, to establish such an endeavor as fundamentally oppositional or reactive in nature only perpetuates the binaries that this thesis seeks to resist.

It is also impossible to exile the translator. Proximity and distance are key parameters in an empathic mapping of text and translation, where the topography of the novels are drawn according to the traumatic terrain shared by both. Therefore, to banish or remove the translator to a relative distance, no matter how distant, maintains the possibility that he or she may exert an empathic influence or presence, as they would still be present on the empathic maps drawn in this thesis. More problematic still is that theoretical conceptualisations of translatorial agency require a translator figure – whether an individual or universalised figure – as a recognised human being in possession of free will and intent. This comparative study seeks to map the complex range of empathic positions within 9/11 fiction, and explore the possibility of translation as a fundamentally empathic process. Therefore, the introduction of a translator, as an autonomous individual capable of empathic action and intent, would introduce a notion of empathic hierarchy – where the texts are subjugated to the translator and author as 'real-world' entities – that would destabilise the textually-empathic maps drawn across the translation divide.

The key question, then, is how to deal with the translator-as-agent in terms that do not encroach on the empathic significance of the concepts of visibility and proximity in several of the novels in this thesis. The most sensible recourse, it seems, is to bracket out the translator completely, where they are neither rendered invisible nor exiled with the possibility of return. Of course, this is not to say that translator agency ought to be erased from other studies: only that, in the case of a comparative study of 9/11 fiction, concepts of translator agency, context and reception are irrelevant. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the agents of translation production do not exist: the translation process is not a vehicle for the intent or agency of the translator, nor should their efforts be aligned with the complex network of translation shifts and interactive elements of text and translation explored in the following chapters. The intentions of the agents of translation, both for the

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[64] Don DeLillo, 'In the ruins of the future', *Guardian*, 22 December 2001.

creation and reception of translated literature, are to be firmly set aside, with this thesis bringing the literary into sharp focus. The aim of such a drastic methodological step is fairly simple, and seeks to test the potential of a comparative literary study of source and target texts that is unencumbered by contextual and strategic models for functional or reception-oriented translation.

Mapping empathic trajectories in 9/11 fiction

The empathy-led structure adopted for this thesis is contrary to that of several existing studies which pursue a chronological order based on the date of publication of each work. In doing so, literary scholars have attempted to frame 9/11 fiction as a developing genre, beginning with the domestic realm of the 'early 9/11 novel' to the subversive and formally-inventive work of authors in the 2010s (although the attribution of such a chronological distinction is largely approximate and often misleading).[65] It was decided early in the research process for this thesis that the imposition of a chronological structure was both artificial and misleading, and sought to impose developmental, even revelatory, narratives on 9/11 fiction as an increasingly complex genre. Indeed, the implied meaning is that early attempts to fictionalise 9/11 were unsuccessful and limited in scope, and here again we find the re-emergence of evaluative narratives on the reception of the genre and the expectations of its content. Moreover, such an approach overlooks that fact that 9/11 fiction marks a relatively intense period of literary production: some sixteen years on from the event, fiction writing that responds primarily to the traumatic event has more or less ceased.

For similar reasons, this thesis has also resisted a chronological structure that seeks to categorise experiences of aftermath: in short, to assign temporal specificity to a state that, by definition, resists linearity and specificity. For example, it could be possible to reorder the novels based on their temporal proximity to the event: with *Falling Man* and *The Zero* beginning, though not terminating, in the immediate aftermath of the event, moving onwards to narratives of commemoration in *The Submission,* and legacy in *Terrorist.* Yet such an approach was rejected on two counts. First, such distinctions expand the temporal setting of the novel to stand for a wider degree of empathic and communicative significance that is largely artificial. For example, a reading of empathy and immediacy in *Falling Man* is necessarily contextually bound by different limits than

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[65] Holloway, *9/11 and the War on Terror*, p.107.

The Submission and its investment in commemoration as an empathic-temporal state. In contrast, while temporality plays a key role in each of the chapters in this thesis, it is not considered indicative of a level of traumatic or empathic recovery and awareness, but as symptomatic of an empathic link between text and translation. Similarly, such a structure seeks to find significance in the nature of empathy itself, as a gatekeeping device for recovery and a progressive experience of trauma and its aftermath. The chapters in this thesis do not aim to sketch such a narrative of development and revelation, but offer a fragmentary portrait of how empathy functions at different junctures of the 9/11 genre.

Chapter 1 – Mapping Empathy in *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* – introduces the fundamental concepts of empathic unsettlement and empathic maps, on which this and subsequent chapters will build. This chapter explores how these topographical maps of empathy and empathic interaction might be constructed through the comparative study of Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and its translation into French, *L'homme qui tombe,* and seeks to establish and navigate identities as destabilised and unsettled positions within the traumatised terrain occupied by both texts. Through a comparative analysis of translation shifts in deixis, this chapter will trace the unsettlement of traumatised identities through their physical, temporal and perspectival locations, asking whether the destabilising process of translation performs the same empathic unsettlement experienced by DeLillo's characters. Building from these fundamental elements of empathic (dis)location, this chapter will also consider how intimacy, possession and appropriation might subvert the deictic categories that not only define empathy, but act as its limits. As such, this chapter sparks what is a thesis-wide focus on how far translation – as a fundamentally empathic process – offers a unique insight into how the interaction between texts and translations might intervene in the construction of empathic maps and positions, and whether it may act as both a disruptive and creative force for expanding the empathic limits of a given text.

In *The Submission* and *Un concours de circonstances*, the tentative attempts of DeLillo's characters to harness their empathic potential in constructing and consolidating their own identities fall into sharp focus. Chapter 2 – *The Submission, Un Concours de Circonstances* and the Empathic Limits of Aftermath – expands the empathic maps of its predecessor to consider how multiplicity – of perspective, traumatic experience and memory – reframes empathy as the gatekeeper of legitimate experiences of trauma. Waldman's characters covet victimhood and the legitimisation of their post-traumatic

identities above all else: a competition or 'concours' for validity and inclusion that colours the potential of empathy as a force for genuine connection and understanding. That these characters veer more strongly towards vicarious and appropriating forms of empathy is secondary: the aim of this study is to trace the impact of empathy as a destabilising and essentially translational force, rather than evaluate its ethical merit. This chapter charts the complex matrix of empathic connections and interactions, and tests the limits set out in this introduction of how far fictional narratives might truly be kept from the pervasive influence of politicised and cultural discourses in the wake of violent trauma and conflict. Multiplicity finds its mirror in translation, and this chapter explores whether translation shifts might offer an alternative to the alterity and dissonance that fuel the plot of the novels in the form of empathic negotiation, interaction and exchange.

From the multiplicity and empathic dynamism of Chapter 2, the return to the individual in Chapter 3 – Axes of Empathy: Locating the 'Terrorist' Worldview in *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* – might seem to represent something of a retreat into the insular world of the protagonist. However, John Updike's *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* are fully immersed in articulating the aftermath of 9/11 as an empathic reality. Outstripping the two-dimensional topography of empathic maps, this chapter introduces new axes of transcendental distance and proximity (vertical) and intimate familiarity (horizontal) to accommodate complex empathic connections both within and across Updike's text and its translation. This chapter begins to move beyond deixis as a measure of empathy as a phenomenon of proximity, and considers how far empathic exposure – as articulated and revealed through translation shifts – might begin to mitigate the influence of alterity and authenticity as frames of reference for both 9/11 fiction and its translation.

While the characters of the first three novels in this thesis seems to stumble upon empathy as a potential means of navigating and finding stability in the aftermath of 9/11, Jess Walter's *The Zero* and its translation *Le Zéro* see empathy explicitly exposed and deconstructed. For Brian Remy, an increasingly dissociative 9/11 first responder, empathy is not a potential means of connection, reciprocity and recovery, but a weapon to be wielded in the aftermath of trauma. Walter's novel and its translation collaboratively dismantle subjectivity and authenticity, ultimately exposing the fallibility of the individual for whom traumatic experience is suppressed by overarching narratives of exceptionalism and the erasure of causality and consequence. Chapter 4 – Empathy, Exceptionalism and the Imaginative Failings of *The Zero* and *Le Zéro* – is concerned with

failures: of imagination, of memory, of authenticity, of chronology, and of empathy. Translation shifts expose the mechanisms of each of these failures, and this chapter seeks to document how a comparative study of text and translation might trace the empathic trajectories of degeneration, appropriation, manipulation and failure at the hands of an empathically-compromised protagonist. Therefore, more than any other pairing in this thesis, this final chapter seeks to test the limits of framing translation as a fundamentally empathic process in texts where empathy is no longer championed as a moralising process of connection and understanding, but exposed as a force for manipulation and subversion.

<u>Wider research aims</u>

The aims of thesis speak not only to a desire to see literary translation theory reimagined for the contemporary era of literary production, but also reflect on the value and innovation of 9/11 fiction uncovered in the process of conducting this research. As such, its implications are far-reaching in their potential influence, and demonstrate the unique insight and value in comparative studies of texts and translations that resist and dispel narratives of alterity and inequality that continue to dominate the field. At its core, this thesis seeks to establish the potential for reframing translation as a fundamentally empathic process through comparative study. In recasting texts and translations as reciprocal and parallel texts, empathically connected across the translation divide, this study hopes to evaluate the potential for a return to the literary text, bracketing out the pervasive influence of context and agency in contemporary translation studies. Crucially, this rejection of agency-led conceptualisations of translation is not an attempt to reinstate prescriptive models for translation practice. This thesis does not simply repeat the trend in objections to translatorial agency as a means of constructing reductive, source-oriented models, where:

> the resistance to the translator's agency is one of the most recurrent issues in the discourse about translation that has dominated the Western tradition, a discourse that has been generally prescriptive in its attempts to safeguard the limits that should clearly oppose translators to authors, and translations to originals.[66]

Instead, this study argues for a discrete approach to the analysis of target-texts that prioritises textual comparison and translation shifts as a means of establishing the

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[66] Rosemary Arrojo, 'Philosophy and Translation', in *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 1*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2010), pp. 247-252 (p.248).

empathic connections and collaborative possibilities of text and translation. Such an approach is not to be generalised as a wider form of translation practice or strategy, but aims to demonstrate the value in translation shifts and comparative literary study as unique and insightful tools for literary analysis. Finally, a word for 9/11 fiction as an innovative and fertile genre for translation comparison and empathic analysis. This thesis seeks to contribute to continuing scholarship on the literary analysis of such works, moving away from context and reception-bound modes of interpretation, and instead emphasising the innovation and value of 9/11 fiction as a creative, innovative and empathic genre of contemporary American fiction.

There is one final thought to add before this comparative study begins in earnest, and one that has played on my mind since this thesis began to take its present shape. It is so often repeated that everyone remembers where they were upon hearing the news of the September 11th attacks, that one must ask whether such a claim is true, or whether it is an idea willed into a truism through repetition. I admit to remembering exactly where I was as I watched the looping news coverage of the fall of the Twin Towers on the 11th of September 2001. Aged 11, I was in front of the television at a neighbour's house after school. It was impossible to watch from my own living room, as a house fire had almost completely destroyed my childhood home and possessions less than two weeks earlier. At the time, I wonder if I was able to process a sense of my own grief, forced into sharp perspective by the violence and suffering unfolding on television screens around the world. Such insight is unlikely. What I have come to ask myself in the years that followed, distilled during the creation of this thesis, is whether something stuck in my mind all those years ago: whether a splinter of that recognition of the suffering of others, of empathy in its most basic and fledgling form, might have found itself buried somewhere in this work. Such an idea is perhaps romantic, and yet in some way begins to capture the essence of this thesis, as a work that is invested in the complexity of empathy and connection felt in the wake of 9/11, and in an openness to the traumatic event as it is relived in fiction and translation.

Mapping Empathy in *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*

Falling Man begins in the chaos of Lower Manhattan on the morning of September 11th 2001, fixing its gaze on Keith Neudecker as he staggers from the stricken North Tower. Hitching a ride to the home of his estranged wife and son, the novel follows the family in the days, months and, eventually, years that chronicle the aftermath of the fall of the towers and the paralysis of its enduring traumatic repercussions. As Keith embarks on a short-lived, extramarital affair with a fellow survivor, his wife, Lianne, immerses herself in the fragmented narratives of the Alzheimer's writing group she facilitates while their young son regresses to monosyllabic speech as he compulsively searches the skies for hijacked planes. Punctuating this 'scrupulously domestic' vision of post-9/11 reality are three vignettes, following terrorist-in-training Hammad from his unremarkable flat in Hamburg, to the cable television and flight simulators of Florida, and finally to the cockpit of a passenger jet bound for the North Tower.[1]

Each of Hammad's narrative interjections marks the end of each of the novel's three sections, named for a triad of false identities in the text. The first, Bill Lawton, the Americanised malapropism for Bin Laden, whispered amongst children, is followed by Ernst Hechinger, the German birth-name of Lianne's mother's lover and former member of Kommune 1 turned art dealer. The final section takes David Janiak as its title, the true identity of the Falling Man performance artist that recreates the censored images of victims falling from the Towers on the streets of Manhattan. The novel is, at least superficially, structured to signpost the possibility for perspective-shifting across its cast of characters, foregrounding false identities (that are steadily revealed as the plot progresses) to draw attention to the transient nature of identity - or at least its thinly-veiled nomenclature - in the post-traumatic realm of DeLillo's creation. With such a diverse array of identities and perspectives ensconced within the novel's most basic structures, there is scope, even for this most domestic of 9/11 novels, to explore the possibility of empathic interactions as a means of navigating the immediacy of the traumatic event.

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[1] Toby Litt, 'Falling Man', *Guardian*, 26 May 2007.

Critical responses to *Falling Man*

Before considering the textual features and empathic potential of text and translation, it is important to acknowledge the hostile climate in which *Falling Man* was received, particularly as this analysis seeks to uncover the subversive potential of both texts to destabilise seemingly simplistic deictic relationships and networks. Writing in late December 2001, Don DeLillo, true to his reputation as 'one of the most significant contemporary American novelists', rallied against rumblings of a contemporary crisis of literature, declaring that 'the narrative' of contemporary fiction writing 'ends in the rubble and it is left to us to create the counternarrative'.[2] Yet when the novelist, renowned for his tentacular, macrocosmic depictions of America in novels such as *Americana* and *Underworld*, published his 9/11 novel *Falling Man* in 2007, the reception was somewhat muted. Much of criticism of DeLillo's work was borne of a sense of disappointment and that, at a mere 244 pages, *Falling Man* fell short, quite literally, of expectations. Yet these external pressures on post-9/11 literary production reach far beyond DeLillo and *Falling Man*, and scholars have since recognised how far the immediate reception of works belonging to this fledgling genre was influenced by a prescriptive sense of 'what 9/11 fiction ought to be doing.'[3] In what has been widely interpreted as short-sighted insularity, the domestic realm of *Falling Man* risks 'simply assimilating the unfamiliar into familiar structures. The crisis is, in every sense of the word, domesticated…all life here is personal; cataclysmic public events are mediated purely and simply in terms of their impact on the emotional entanglements of their protagonists.'[4] In this sense, the novel is seen as failing to engage with the scale of the event, both emotionally and stylistically.

The verdict of critics and literary scholars alike seems to be that DeLillo's novel represents the first of a series of missed novelistic opportunities, adding 'next to nothing to our understanding of the trauma at the heart of the action. In fact, it evades that trauma, it suppresses its urgency and disguises its difference by inserting it in a series of familiar

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[2] *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*, ed. by John N. Duvall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.1; Don DeLillo, 'In the ruins of the future', *Guardian*, 22 December 2001.
[3] John N. Duvall and Robert P. Marzec, 'Narrating 9/11', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies,* 57.3 (2011), 381-400 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2011.0069>, (p.384).
[4] Richard Gray, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis', *American Literary History,* 21.1 (2009), 128-148, < https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajn061>, (p.134).

tropes.'[5] Even without considering DeLillo's previous fictional works, *Falling Man*'s undeniably insular, microcosmic narrative on the repercussions of trauma for the individual citizen seems at odds with the novelist's bold calls for the construction of a literary counternarrative in the face of terrorism. In the aftermath of 9/11, this counternarrative took on transnational, or at the very least extra-American, aspirations and six years later, the insularity and near-paralysis of *Falling Man* came at a time when 9/11 fiction was under pressure to look beyond the borders of America. The clearest origin of this criticism lies with DeLillo's alleged cursory and abbreviated treatment of the terrorist perpetrator, representative, for some critics, of a limited and domesticated gaze and an overwhelming failure 'to define cultural otherness'[6]. Mishra's criticism of the novel is fairly typical, insofar as it encourages a binary, and essentially evaluative, reading of 9/11 fiction as a genre distilled into a series of oppositions – public and private, national and transnational, narrative and counternarrative – against which DeLillo's work is found wanting. For Richard Gray, these binaries are not merely external forces, but are enshrined in the work itself:

> Works like *Falling Man*…locate crisis in terms of opposition – them and us, the personal and the political, the private and the public, the oppressor and the victim – and then attempt to accommodate the series of binary oppositions they construct into a transnational narrative and mythic pattern in which, so it is hoped, those oppositions can be resolved and reconciled.[7]

Yet for me, Gray's comment are somewhat ill-placed, and seek to absorb *Falling Man* into prescriptive discussions of the transnational capabilities of 9/11 fiction based purely on the inclusion of a fictionalised terrorist perpetrator. In truth, there is little textual evidence to suggest that Hammad has the remit to intervene in the creation and navigation of empathic networks in either work. Gray's use of the term 'opposition' is also slightly misleading, as it assumes that each agent in the binary relationships described above are of equal status or intensity, thus contributing to a conflict of profound difference. However, if this opposition is viewed as a form of distance, where the positions of each are negotiated in relation to a shared central entity - in this case, the traumatic event around which they come into sharp focus - binary structures of difference might be

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[5] Ibid., p.133.
[6] Pankaj Mishra, 'The End of Innocence', *Guardian*. 19 May 2007.
[7] Richard Gray, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), p.65.

reframed as negotiable, relative positions, particularly with the addition of a second, translated text against which their disparity might be compared.

Though not the primary focus of this discussion, I believe an empathy-led, cross-textual analysis of *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* challenges critical discourses on the novel's failures as a transnational, border-crossing work of fiction, namely in proposing that the texts fail in their depiction of otherness through a commitment to, and near-obsessive desire to unravel, notions of selfhood in the wake of trauma. Of the four novels considered in this thesis, *Falling Man* explores empathy in its most fledgling state, and establishes the fundamental structural features on which any empathic interaction must hinge. In the case *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*, empathic encounters, or at least the potential for a meaningful and reciprocal interaction within the traumatic realm, require a stable notion of selfhood, where the other (in their role as the other agent in any interaction or relationship) in unreachable. So too is any stable notion of temporality, location or perspective: all are untethered in the wake of destabilising and totalising traumatic experience. The world of the novel and its translation are therefore fundamentally unsettled, questioning how far any interaction can be truly empathic, where no stable notion of identity, and therefore no fixed empathic instigator, exists.

Empathic unsettlement

Empathic unsettlement offers an incisive, theoretical framework for conceptualising the potential reciprocity of interactions and identities within traumatised texts – *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* included – as it foregrounds a reading of empathy as a process of dislocation and relocation. Developed by trauma theorist Dominik LaCapra, empathic unsettlement may be defined as:

> feeling for another without losing sight of the distinction between one's own experience and the experience of the other...it involves virtual not vicarious experience – that is to say, experience in which one puts oneself in the other's position without taking the place of – or speaking for – the other, or becoming a surrogate victim who appropriates the victim's voice.[8]

By distinguishing between virtual and vicarious representations of identity and

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[8] Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2004), p.135.

victimhood, LaCapra opens up the possibility for a theoretical framework built upon the unstable, yet reciprocally-constructed, networks of identities in 9/11 fiction that conventional literary translation approaches and critical literature on DeLillo's work both struggle to accommodate. From this perspective, empathic unsettlement is able to embrace identities as destabilised and dislocated constructs, and allows empathically-implicated identities to interact as reciprocal narrative positions, rather than as irreconcilable points of difference. The possibility of a binary construction between two identities does exist, and could be accommodated by LaCapra's framework but, unlike theories of domestication and foreignisation, or the implied conflict found in critical approaches to DeLillo's text and its translation, difference and opposition is not enshrined in the fundamental structure of the empathic unsettlement framework. Throughout this discussion I intend to combat the proliferation of binary constructions of opposition that would see the empathic structures of both texts reduced to simplified, conflicting categories of identity: a process of categorisation and generalisation that explicitly contradicts the complex and fluid representations of post-traumatic identities that each text constructs.

As the notion of empathic unsettlement has been adopted into wider, critical discourses on literary empathy, the boundaries of the term have been expanded to reflect on the visual aspect of literary narratives on trauma. Jill Bennett has emphasised the significance of empathic unsettlement as an 'appropriate form of engagement [with] trauma imagery' that describes 'the aesthetic experience of simultaneously *feeling for* another and becoming aware of a distinction between one's own perceptions and the experience of the other' that is intrinsic to DeLillo's construction of the post traumatic city.[9] Elsewhere, empathic unsettlement has been defined as 'an affective, disturbing response to the traumatic experience of others, deeply bound up with the object of representation'.[10] In DeLillo's text, the object of this representation is not an identity or position involved in the empathic encounter, but the contextual frame for the encounter: the physical destruction, and subsequent absence, of the twin towers. In this sense, the object of representation is no longer a tangible, physical representation but a memory: a

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[9] Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p.8.
[10] David K. Herzberger, 'Representing the Holocaust: Story and Experience in Antonio Munoz Molina's *Sefarad'*, *Romance Quarterly*, 51.2 (2004), 85-96, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3200/RQTR.51.2.85-96> [accessed 27 July 2014], (p.87).

ghostly verisimilitude of the towers for the traumatised characters of the novel. When adopted into a frame for empathic exchange, David Hertzberger's definition of empathy moves much closer to the destabilising and dislocating force of empathy in *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe,* as a means 'disarticulating identities and "selves" that have been beset by trauma.'[11] The following analysis will do just this: disarticulate and pull apart notions of identity at the skeletal level, considering how identities and empathic positions are created as temporal, spatial and perspectival locations that are themselves vulnerable to the shifts and pressures enacted by the translation process. In this chapter, I approach identities as dissociative textual concepts: relative positions around a traumatic centre with the potential for empathy and exchange, but that cannot be adopted into, nor extrapolated to create, an oppositional relationship between the source and target text.

Of particular significance to the reading of identities as empathic positions pursued in this discussion is the inherent culpability that LaCapra recognises in the practice of empathy as a form of virtual body-swapping. By prioritising virtual empathy above vicarious experience, LaCapra frames empathic unsettlement as temporary, reversible and therefore, I would argue, transferable and reciprocal in nature. It is this very process of relocation and perspectival exchange that a comparative analysis of text and translation seeks to secure, where *L'homme qui tombe* offers an alternative perspective that is at once distinct from, yet bound up in, a textual and empathic exchange with the source text. Crucially, virtual experience, and the simulation of otherness that this body-swapping potentially entails, offers a significant counterpoint to forms of 'crude empathy...[which] appropriates the experience of the other, reduces it to familiar frames of reference and therefore violates its singularity'.[12] Adopted once more into a binary framework, this definition of crude empathy echoes the vocabulary of appropriation and assimilation that underpins the domesticating translation strategies that this comparative analysis rejects.

The key to this comparative rendering of source and target texts, and of the empathic positions within each, is their reciprocity. Empathic unsettlement offers a crucial insight into empathy and reciprocity as 'a dual structure, a movement both

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[11] Ibid., p.87.
[12] Stef Craps, 'Linking Legacies of Loss: Traumatic Histories and Cross-Cultural Empathy in Caryl Phillips's *Higher Ground* and *The Nature of Blood*', *Studies in the Novel* 40.1 (2008), 191-202. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sdn.0.0000> (pp.196-7).

towards and away, which forms a simultaneous gesture of proximity (identification, subjectivity) and distance (objectivity, critical understanding)'.[13] For a comparative reading of text and translation, this proximity is not a relative distance between those identities or positions implicated in the empathic encounter, but an overarching proximity to the traumatic event from which their dislocation and resettlement in the post-traumatic realm must be negotiated. Yet even the terrain upon which these identities are mapped is unstable: a temporal, geographical and perspectival form of empathic unsettlement that is mirrored in the translated text, and indeed performed by the process of translation itself. Therefore, one of the key aims of this analysis is to reframe *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* as reciprocal texts, and to map the shifts in proximal locations and identities that directly influence the textual construction of empathy. The translated text sees the virtual experience of empathic unsettlement made real, offering an alternative, though not oppositional, textual work where empathy and proximity can be mapped from the interactions between the source and target text.

Drawing empathic maps across text and translation

The terminology at the core of this discussion of mapping empathy and empathic potential originates from Michael Rothberg's vision of what he believes should be 9/11 fiction's transnational aims:

> 'What we need from 9/11 novels are cognitive maps that imagine how US citizenship looks and feels beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, both for Americans and others.'[14]

Stripping away the value-based judgements and transnational discourses that frame this, and other, critical discussions of 'what 9/11 fiction ought to be doing', by far the most interesting aspect of Rothberg's proposition is the potential for these novels to provide topographical insights into how identity might be constructed.[15] However, I propose a shift in terminology to consider how works of 9/11 fiction create empathic representations of the post-traumatic environments in which they are set. Moreover, by introducing the

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[13] Lewis Ward, 'A Simultaneous Gesture of Proximity and Distance: W.G. Sebald's Empathic Narrative Persona', *Journal of Modern Literature,* 36.1 (2012), 1-16, < http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/ jmodelite.36.1.1>, (p.3).
[14] Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Gray', *American Literary History* 21.1 (2009), 152-158 (p.158).
[15] John N. Duvall and Robert P. Marzec, 'Narrating 9/11', p.384.

translated text, this discussion aims to create empathic maps through a process which itself mimics the reciprocal nature of empathy itself. In this case, the translated text stands in for the virtual traumatic experience of LaCapra's theory, creating a double-text where translation shifts reveal points of disjuncture, disparity and vulnerability in the construction of empathic frames. Whereas cognitive maps offer the opportunity to 'pivot away from homeland and seek out a centrifugal literature of extra-territoriality', this analysis asks how the centrifugal force of the repercussions of the traumatic event, as textual representations of the trauma, expand on two frontiers: the source text and its translation.[16]

The main aim of this comparative analysis is to foreground textual representations of empathy, and to consider how empathic structures and interactions are therefore vulnerable to shifts and pressures in translation. Sketching a topographical view of empathy across the texts is an inherently structural process, guided by structural language; in the case of *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*, empathic maps are grounded in deictic language. Uncovering the temporal, spatial and perspectival construction of the post-traumatic terrain of the texts offers a unique insight into how empathy is grounded in textual and structural configurations. Yet it is the comparative study of translation that is all the more significant, and this chapter will illustrate how a comparative analysis of translation shifts not only mimics the reciprocity and unsettlement of empathy itself, but also provides an incisive, critical tool for mapping destabilised literary terrains and highlighting the textual vulnerabilities indicative of empathic potential. From these empathic maps, this analysis will then consider whether empathic interactions are capable of subverting the deictic structures from which they emerge, or if these frameworks ultimately govern and restrict the potential for empathic unsettlement and successful empathic engagement in each text.

Linguistic deixis: The building blocks of empathy

Temporal deixis

From a purely grammatical perspective, temporal deixis is a linguistic category that, in a translation pairing with French, is particularly susceptible to shifts and revision in translation, due to the time-bound, and time-specific, nature of the French language in comparison to English. However, this analysis is not interested in arbitrary shifts in

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[16] Rothberg, 'A Failure of Imagination', p.158.

temporality: translation shifts brought about purely by grammatical and linguistic structures do not contribute to a critical discussion of translation potential and comparative analysis from the perspective of this thesis. Instead, this analysis of *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* is interested in instances where the temporality of the text and translation signifies a moment of dissonance or discord, and which can therefore be traced to a wider thematic, narrative or stylistic shift across the texts. Therefore, rather than extrapolating these shifts in temporality from a point of origin that is linguistic or grammatical, this discussion will attempt to align disturbances in temporality across the texts as a stylistic feature of translation that is symptomatic of the texts' wider insecurities regarding time, and of the conflict between linear and cyclical temporal structures in relation to traumatic experience.

The underlying tension in the novel is fundamentally temporal: the non-teleological structure of the text is at odds with the protagonist's futile attempts to experience and structure trauma as a linear and chronological events, driven forward by causality. Even the ability to segment trauma into identifiable, singular events or emotions is wholly inaccessible to Keith, and with the temporal perspective of the protagonist compromised by trauma, it is the deictic elements of the text which are responsible for establishing temporality. In the opening pages of the text, Keith escapes the chaos of downtown Manhattan in a state of near-somnambulism, and flags down a passing truck. When prompted by the driver, he gives the address of his former marital home, now occupied by his estranged wife and their young son. For Keith, the automated response functions as a sort of revelation, indicating that his destination was determined without any conscious effort or intent:

> '[Keith] understood where he'd been going **all along.**'[17]
>
> '[Keith] comprit où il allait **depuis le début.**'[18]

In the English text, 'all along' creates two temporal effects: an implicit sense of chronology and progression while remaining non-specific in identifying a single, temporal instance. The duration of Keith's journey back to his wife and son is

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[17] Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (London: Picador, 2007), p.6. All subsequent references to this text will refer to this edition.

[18] Don DeLillo, *L'homme qui tombe*, translated by Marianne Véron (Paris : Actes Sud, 2010), p.13. All subsequent references to this text will refer to this translated edition.

indeterminate and has the potential to stretch beyond the limits of the traumatic events that are contained by the narrative: limits that this example of deixis neglects to set. Yet despite this lack of specificity, the phrase 'all along' is essentially linear and alludes to a chronological sense of progress that fits into a conventional, though implicit, structure of cause and consequence. None of the translation shifts in this thesis exist in isolation, and this analysis of DeLillo, in English and in translation, seeks to position translation shifts in a wider narrative trajectory that reveals their thematic, stylistic and structural impact. In this instance, this single moment of gesturing towards a temporal field that extends beyond the present trauma in both directions alludes to the wider temporal structure of the novel. The traumatic moment comes to function as a centrifugal force: an event that exists on a timeline of conflict and reconciliation, chafing against the nostalgia and inevitability with which the trajectory of their relationship is traced.

In contrast, the translated text introduces a degree of specificity that is entirely absent from the original text. The parallel passage signals that Keith understood his destination 'since the beginning'. While it could be conceded that the text is not clear on which beginning this temporal phrase alludes to, it is clear that the translated text frames temporality in clear, chronological terms. Causality is also present in the deictic language, where the term 'depuis', or 'since', identifies an intervening period between a former state or event, and that which is experienced at present. By extension, the implication is that a beginning requires an end. Whether Keith's escape – climbing into the truck – signals a conclusion to the traumatic experience as experienced as a present, temporal crisis, or reaches further into the future, the result is that the translated narrative explicitly gestures to a chronological timeframe that is not present in the original text. Moreover, Keith is granted a measure of temporal clarity not possessed by his source text counterpart: he is able, despite his traumatised state, to compartmentalise the traumatic process. In other words, this shift in temporal deixis suggests that he is both able to inhabit and step outside of the trauma: an omniscience that is at odds with the wider temporal, spatial and subjective symptoms of trauma that he exhibits.

It is particularly striking that temporal markers of chronology and diachronic temporality are most concentrated in the opening pages of the translated text, where the narrative is in its most unsettled state. Where there is discord in the original text, the translation finds and capitalises on any references that might reinstate a linear sense of chronology into the traumatic experience on display:

'things did not **seem** charged in the usual ways'[19]

'les choses **n'**avaient **plus** la même intensité que d'habitude'[20]

The translation consistently seeks to instill the narrative voice with the clarity of a diachronic experience of trauma, attempted here in the implicit chronology of 'ne…plus' or 'no longer'. The extension of the idea of familiarity and normality into a temporal, and therefore time-bound, concept is exploited in translation, and described as a process of measurable duration. Crucially, this shift requires a relative temporal position , and the recognition of such, if it is to make sense: if things are no longer charged in the usual ways, they are different in the present to their appearance in the past. Whether the focalising perspective in the target text is the narrative voice, or Keith himself, the past and present are recognised as distinct temporal terrains that should be inaccessible to a traumatised witness or narrator. Moreover, this recognition alludes to a definitive temporal break, where a clear 'before' and 'after' are divided by the fixed temporality of the traumatic event: a distinction that is inaccessible in the source text. Yet the question remains as to whom this temporal cognizance belongs. The possibility of a traumatised focaliser remains in the source text, where the emphasis is on the subjective status of perception, rather than objectivity and factual evidence. Yet the verb of perception – 'seem' – is omitted in translation and replaced with a verb of state – to have/possess – which performs a factual, descriptive function. The result is a shift from an unsettling sense of unfamiliarity and wrongness that is essentially subjective in nature, to an objective measure of time that exists independently of the traumatised lens of the source text narrative.

Time as a quantifiable and chronological concept is a recurrent feature of the translated text, and Keith's newfound ability to dissect and manage his traumatic experiences in temporal terms is best illustrated by the deictic function of 'c'est alors'. As he walks away from the destruction at Ground Zero, Keith displays a fleeting awareness of exterior events as factual occurrences, rather than moments of emotional engagement with, or reaction to, his surroundings. However, while the temporal status of these events is tied into this traumatic state of disconnect in the English text, the translation again gestures to a level of temporal and causal coherence that is only experienced by Keith in

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[19] *Falling Man*, p.5.
[20] *L'homme qui tombe,* p.12.

the target text:

> **'In time** he heard the sound of the second fall.'[21]

> **'C'est alors** qu'il entendit le bruit de la seconde chute.'[22]

As with any translation shifts, these deictic markers function as part of a wider narrative treatment of temporality as experienced by the protagonist, that is constructed through both Keith's compromised first-person perspective, and the objective – at least in comparison to Keith's subjective view – narrative voice. The precedent for a dissonant experience of time is set in the novel's opening pages, where 'the noise lay everywhere they ran, stratified sound collecting around them, and [Keith] walked away from it and into it at the same time'.[23] Keith experiences a disorienting form of synesthesia, where otherwise abstract sensations and perceptions take on spatial and temporal qualities that act to delineate traumatic experience from objective, logical and chronological temporal structures. 'In time' maintains the same lack of specificity seen in the previous example of temporal deixis, and similarly refers to a moment that, although inevitably temporally bound, cannot be accessed from a temporally-compromised perspective. As such, there is no sense of where this event might be located on a chronological timeline of traumatic experience, nor is there any indication that the duration of Keith's escape from the towers can be understood in terms of linearity or progress, at least from the perspective of the protagonist as narrative focaliser.

The phrase 'c'est alors' performs a strikingly different deictic function to the imprecise 'in time', and shifts the focus of the narrative gaze onto the temporal and spatial positioning of the protagonist. The French word 'alors' can be most simply translated to mean 'then' – a distinct, temporal punctuation – with the phrase literally transposed to mean 'it is/was then' or 'at that/this moment'. In the target text, the sound of the fall of the second tower occurs at a specific and determinable moment – 'it was then' – within the timeframe of Keith's escape. Although this deictic marker might only implicitly allude to a wider sense of chronology by the protagonist, what is clear is that the narrative voice, which has thus far exhibited the synesthesia and dissonance of Keith's own compromised perspective, is, in this moment, capable of temporal clarity and

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[21] *Falling Man*, p.5.
[22] *L'homme qui tombe,* p.12.
[23] *Falling Man,* p.4.

cognizance. Yet more than this specificity, 'alors' introduces a sense of consequential or progressive action, whereby one action or event creates the conditions for 'c'est alors' to function as a temporal phrase.

The temporal specificity of 'c'est alors' requires an equally fixed spatial location to which it might be attached, if it is to function within the linear timeline that the French text begins to establish in its opening pages. The stability of this alignment between temporal and spatial elements in the text may seem logical, but is significant and all the more jarring when positioned in the wider narrative of traumatic experience in which they occur. DeLillo's text performs many of the symptoms of trauma through its cyclical structure, sensory confusion as synesthesia, and temporal oscillations, even at sentence level. The end of the novel finds Keith only minutes from where it began, hurled to the floor of his office by the moment of impact on the north tower. The trigger for the splicing of Keith's perspective and that of the narrative voice is Rumsey's death. As Keith attempts to save his friend, 'the man opened his eyes and died', and the paragraph ends with an empathic section break that follows the clipped admission that:

'**This is when** he wondered what was happening **here**.'[24]

Deictic language not only serves to outline the relative position of the protagonist and narrative voice in temporal or spatial terms, but also performs a demonstrative function that emphasises the cohesion, or indeed the disparity, in their proximity to the traumatic event. Generally speaking, the shift between the present and imperfect tenses, as seen in the example above, signals a smooth transition between the perspectives implicated in the use of free indirect discourse: from the present-tense immediacy of the protagonist, to the extended, more measured, imperfect-tense gaze of the omniscient narrator. However, as in the above phrase, temporal deixis serves to intervene in this relationship, emphatically signalling that both perspectives inhabit the same temporal and, by extension, spatial terrain. Yet this tension is more complex than a dissonance between character and narrator voices, which cannot be so easily distinguished in a novel that exhibits structural symptoms of trauma through the protagonist himself. Indeed, this deictic and temporal cohesion between the two voices points to the seemingly contagious effects of the trauma on the protagonist, as both fictional entity and narrative focaliser, and an omniscient voice

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[24] *Falling Man,* p.243.

that is presumably immune to these same traumatic influences. Temporal oscillations are therefore not simply indicative of a shift in perspective or voice, but symptomatic of the disruptive and dissonant effects of trauma on the linear, logical structures that the novel genre conventionally adopts.

The impact of a cohesive relationship between deictic language and tense on how narrative voices might coexist is made clear in the translated text, where the grammatical sense of the source text is transposed, but the temporal locations of those implicated are not:

'c'est alors qu'il se demanda ce qui se passait **là**.'[25]

In translation, the phrase straddles three distinct timeframes (present-past simple-imperfect) and yet the imperfect tense, which would usually bridge the temporal divide between the past and present in French, is located at the end of the phrase, consolidating the sense that this is an *ongoing* experience and therefore an extended temporal moment. However, the far more instrumental translation shift in the above phrase disrupts the temporal-spatial alignment of the original text: secured by the adverb 'là'. Translated as 'there', this translation shift from 'here' to 'là' disrupts the temporal-spatial cohesion of the original text, and introduces distance between the protagonist and narrative voice that is deictically performed. In the source text, the present and imperfect structures of the passage share the same temporal 'here'. The phrase returns to its point of origin – *this* – emphasising the immediacy of the experience; an immediacy that is not only inhabited by the protagonist, but which bleeds into the temporal structures of a narrative that itself inhabits the traumatic moment.

In contrast, the French text enacts a sense of both physical and temporal distance between the traumatic experiences of the protagonist and the now-explicit objectivity of the narrative voice. The adverb 'là' gestures to a space that is distinct from that inhabited by Keith, and offers two possible interpretations. Either this distance suggests that Keith is able to identify himself as somehow distinct from the traumatic space, or it signals a moment of intervention, where the narrative voice is capable of drawing on this objective distinction between a violent 'here' and a safer, distinct 'there'. Regardless of which of these is the case, the implications are the same: in both examples, 'c'est alors' introduces

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[25] *L'homme qui tombe*, p. 313.

specificity and objectivity into a narrative that, caught in the throes of trauma, is unable to access either in the original text. The imposition of a chronological timeline – particularly one that is available to an otherwise traumatised protagonist – clashes with the suspended temporality of an opening scene that, in the original text, 'makes time stand still; one arrested moment stands in metonymically for the whole horror.'[26] In essence, the synchrony of the source text is not a form of temporal specificity and accuracy, but of suspension, where the immediacy of the event, experienced and mediated in the present, cannot be articulated in chronological or sequential terms. In contrast, the translated passage favours a diachronic approach to trauma, and is able to identify and articulate moments within Keith's traumatic experience that emphasise its sequential and therefore progressive nature.

Spatial deixis

The destruction at the heart of *Falling Man's* trauma, though explored temporally, is essentially one of space and landscape, and is therefore encoded in the spatial deictic language of both texts. These two frames for recording trauma are inexorably linked, as the creation of exclusive temporal categories occurs at the epicentre of the traumatic event where New York, as a physical, built environment, is subjected to immense, transformative forces for which conventional, linear forms of time struggle to account. Therefore, the temporal categories of 'before and 'after' find spatial counterparts in translation in the creation of distinct spatial and perspectival locations, instigated by deictic shifts in the target text. In the opening pages of both texts, the terrain on which the narrative might find its temporal and geographical footing is itself destabilised and, at least in the case of the original text, so too is the spatial stability of both protagonist and narrative voice. This analysis of spatial deixis will focus on the synchronic function of translation shifts, as linguistic additions or adaptations that capture a specific spatial and temporal location within the opening pages of the texts, rather than considering how these are developed in the remainder of the narrative, or indeed how they might contribute cumulatively to a wider narrative shift in perspective or outlook. Limiting the scope of the analysis in this way places deictic language in sharp focus, revealing how examples of spatial deixis might instigate a shift away from the destabilised terrain of the source text, towards the distinct spatial categories and positions that would see Keith's trauma

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[26] Linda S. Kauffman, 'World Trauma Center', *American Literary History*, 21.3 (2009), 647-659, <https://doi-org.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/alh/ajp015>, (p.652).

adopted into a conventional linear and causal narrative.

Spatial deixis serves two key functions in *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*: to establish the wider terrain in which the action of the texts unfolds, and to locate the distinct positions of individuals, relative to one another and to the traumatic centre from which the narrative begins, within this wider space. As such, examples of spatial deixis are crucial to an empathy-led analysis of the texts, as any attempt to implement the essentially interactive framework for empathic unsettlement requires a complex mapping of where empathic players and agents might be positioned within the narrative. This interactivity is the single most important element of understanding empathy in the novels, and yet any shift in the spatial configurations of either text or translation will impact upon how the two might be comparatively mapped in terms of their deictic positions, as the following examples illustrate.

> 'maybe **this is what** things look like when no one is **here** to see them.'[27]

> 'peut-être **est-ce à quoi** ressemblent les choses quand personne n'est **là** pour les voir'.[28]

In this instance, the translation secures two distinct shifts which combine to secure a decided shift in meaning away from that of the original text. The most significant shift is in the spatial positioning of the adverbs in each text: the 'here' of the English text becomes the French 'là' or 'there'. The inclusion of adverbs of place require, almost by definition, a relative position or perspective from which their deictic function can be deciphered. For example, the use of 'here' suggests that the spatial (and temporal) terrain being described is occupied by the narrative focaliser: the narrative perspective is created *within* the space. In contrast, 'là' or 'there' indicates distance, whereby the narrative focaliser occupies a spatial terrain that is distinct and different from that which is being described. This positioning is crucial to deciphering where each text places the narrative voice within the traumatised terrains they describe, particularly if they are to be framed with an understanding of empathy as an essentially interactive process**.**

With these relative positions in mind, the disruptive effects of the way in which

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[27] *Falling Man*, p.5.

[28] *L'homme qui tombe*, p.12. Back translation: 'Perhaps this is what things look like when no one is there to see them.'

these adverbs are collocated in the translated text is all the more significant, and furthers the case for identifying the shift from 'here' to 'là' as one that primarily spatial and perspectival in nature. In the English text, the deictic function of 'this' is also demonstrative, emphasising the spatial and temporal cohesion between the narrative perspective and the terrain of the novel itself. The collocation of 'this' and 'here' is congruous with a reading of the English narrative that recognises the narrative voice as inhabiting the spatial and temporal realm it describes. However, this collocation is disrupted in translation, in so far as the shifts that both deictic terms undergo results in the creation of a new spatial relationship between the adverb 'là' and the demonstrative terminology that, in the original text, clarifies its relative positioning. In translation, the deictic function of 'this' is rendered as 'est-ce à quoi': a pronominal phrase that retains the literal meaning of 'this' but lacks the deictic emphasis and important relative proximity between narrator and space that the French '-ci' would indicate. The result is a creation of distance on two fronts: the translation backs away from the proximity of 'here' to a distinct 'there' that is no longer occupied and mediated by the protagonist, but experienced at distance by a narrative voice capable of objectivity and interrogative rhetoric ('est-ce à quoi').

Falling Man is a novel in which the traumatised and compromised gaze of the protagonist destabilises the very narrative structures designed to contain such a perspective. The technique of free indirect discourse is hampered by temporal and spatial shifts that use deictic language to problematise and relocate the geographic world of the text: an untethered terrain that is itself experienced in proximity to the relative positions of an equally untethered protagonist and narrative voice. In contrast, *L'homme qui tombe* functions via a series of compartmentalisations, whereby 'here' and 'there' are not only distinct temporal categories, but spatial zones that are distinct and differentiated. Yet these shifts are not merely descriptive: they implicate the narrative structures and perspectives that contribute to a novel-wide discourse on trauma and proximity and hinge on relative positions within the world of the text and narrative voice. In this sense, the temporal or spatial position of the reader relative to the text is irrelevant, as both texts enact and embody the same deictic insecurities and oscillations experienced by their traumatised characters.

'Things **inside** were distant and still**, where** he was supposed to be.'[29]

'**À l'intérieur** les choses étaient lointaines et immobiles, **là** où il était censé être'[30]

At first glance, the sole addition of 'là' in the translated phrase above might be understood as an example of explicitation, where the insertion of a pronoun in French clarifies the muddled collocation of clauses in the excerpt from the English text. However, I would argue that in the context of the wider deictic shifts and manipulations across the text, this addition is not a marker of explicitation but of a translation shift. This is not to say that the two categories are mutually exclusive, but that the title of explicitation detracts and distracts from the impact of additions or changes in translation that signal a wider and significant shift, independent of linguistic, stylistic or syntactic structures.

Murtisari's recent work on tracing the origins of explicitation in the search for a robust definition of the term offers a valuable starting point for any research on the contemporary usage of the term, and particularly for this analysis, in its attempt to challenge the relevance of functional terminology to a comparative, process-focused view on translation.[31] Vinay and Darbelnet's first attempts to define explicitation provide the foundation of the term's contemporary usage, as:

> 'un procédé qui consiste à introduire dans LA des précisions qui restent implicites dans LD, mais qui se dégagent du contexte ou de la situation.'[32]

> 'a process whereby the translation introduces precision and specificity into a TT that is only implicit in the ST, but which is also independent of the context and location of the texts.'[33]

Contemporary definitions of explicitation seek to reconcile the role of translation as a mediatory force, clarifying and equalising temporal, cultural and linguistic differences, with its reactionary potential as a means of deciphering and revealing the implicit content of a given source text. Blum-Kulka uses the term to represent 'an observed cohesive explicitness from SL to TL texts regardless of the increase traceable to difference

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[29] *Falling Man*, p.3.
[30] *L'homme qui tombe,* p.11.
[31] Elisabet Titik Murtisari, 'Explicitation in Translation Studies: The journey of an elusive concept', *Translation & Interpreting,* 8.2 (2016), 64-81.
[32] Jean-Paul, Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, *Stylistique comparée de l'anglais et du français* (Paris/Montréal: Didier/Beauchemin, 1958), p.9.
[33] Own translation.

between the two linguistic and textual systems involved': a definition that is partially aligned with the view of this thesis, whereby translation shifts are not attributed to the linguistic and structural differences observed between French and English.[34] However, while the distinction between what might be considered implicit and explicit content in translation remains tenuously defined in contemporary studies of literary translation, the term has been adopted by functionalist theorists and practitioners as evidence for translator intervention, where the translator is credited with 'expanding the TL text, building into it a semantic redundancy in the original.'[35] Yet for both theorists, explicitation is an additional feature of translation, rather than an integral element of grammatical and semantic meaning in the translated text. In contrast, a defining feature of the translation shifts explored in this thesis is their significant impact on both the meaning of a single unit or sentence of text, as well as their wider role in the manipulation and creation of innovation target-text narratives.

Seguinot's work on explicitation underlines the fundamental challenge in using current terminology in a comparative and discursive approach to translation shifts, where explicitation is considered an essentially redundant or supplementary technique:

> The term 'explicitation' should therefore be reserved in translation studies for additions in a translated text which cannot be explained by structural, stylistic, or rhetorical differences between the two languages. In other words, to prove that there was explicitation, there must have been the possibility of a correct but less explicit or less precise version.[36]

The key criterion in Seguinot's version of explicitation is the possibility of imprecision: of a target text that is correct – from a structural, stylistic and rhetorical perspective – and that renders any imprecise statements in the original text in more specific or explicit terms. However, the terms used in all of these definitions hinge on a sense of dichotomy that spans the source and target texts – explicit and implicit, precision and imprecision – and views the translated text as an expansion of a source work.

A single term in Murtisari's study of explicitation resonates with the aims of this thesis: 'a closer examination of Vinay and Darbelnet's examples of explicitation reveals

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[34] Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 'Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), p.300.

[35] Gabriela Saldanha, 'Explicitation Revisited: Bringing the Reader into the Picture', *Trans-kom* 1.1 (2008), 20-35, <http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd01nr01/trans-kom_01_01_03_Saldanha_Explicitation.20080707.pdf>, [accessed 14 April 2014], (p. 22).

[36] Candace Séguinot, 'Pragmatics and the explicitation hypothesis', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 1.2 (1988), 106-113, (p. 108).

that they are all cases that result in a more specific/informative meaning in TL, not the spelling out of *recoverable* meaning that results in generalization.'[37] Perhaps explicitation does not expand and exploit implicit information in a source text: instead, it can be understood as a process of recovery. This is, in part, what translation shifts in this thesis represent: the space created in an autonomous target text enabling the salvage or narratives, nuance and references. However, none of these definitions allow for explicitation as a form of creativity that is not restrained by the source text, and it is for this reason that I delineate markers of explicitation from translation shifts.

To return to the parallel quotations from which this analysis began, the function of 'là' in the French text is both deictic and demonstrative: identifying a clear and distinct spatial zone, as well as a 'there' from which a relative 'here' can be extrapolated (though it is not explicitly inhabited in either text). Moreover, the addition is employed in a strictly spatial sense in this example, where its use as a translation shift emphasises the possibility of a cohesive relationship between the temporal and spatial status of a given perspective. The translated phrase also imposes a standardised form of syntax, creating a clear collocation between the two prepositional elements of the sentence – 'à l'intérieur' and 'là' – that headline their respective clauses. Again, this process of standardisation could be considered a simple example of explicitation were it not to implicate the deictic and proximal positioning of text, protagonist and focaliser. Instead, this deictic and demonstrative addition contributes to the reinstatement of 'inside and outside [as] exclusive and opposite spatial categories'; a feature of the translated text that is consistently and cohesively pursued through the use of deictic language.[38]

The purpose of deconstructing definitions of translation explicitation in response to translation shifts is to test how far delineating the two might allow for a the latter to be described without the constraints or baggage that comes with contemporary translation theory terminology. The difficulty in challenging conventional forms of translation analysis comes in setting out the terms and parameters for a comparative study in such a way that the project is not inherently undermined by the translation approach or philosophy from which key terms, such as explicitation, are derived. The inferiority

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[37] Elisabet Titik Murtisari, 'Explicitation in Translation Studies: The journey of an elusive concept', *Translation & Interpreting* 8.2 (2016), 64-81 (p.67). Own emphasis.
[38] Hamilton Carroll, '"Like Nothing in this Life": September 11 and the Limits of Representation in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man'*, *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 40.1 (2003), 107-130 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/saf.2013.0005>, (p.113).

complex felt and perpetuated by many translation scholars has resulted in the contemporary usage of translation terminology favouring functionalist and translator-led interpretations of theoretical approaches. For example, in critical discussions of explicitation, it has been suggested that the translation process 'always increases the semantic relation among the parts of a translated text, establishing a greater cohesion through explicitness', to such an extent that explicitation is widely considered an indicative feature of translation.[39] Even Blum-Kulka, despite distinguishing between explicitation and shifts bound by inherent differences between languages acknowledges that explicitation may be attributed to the translator, where he/she 'simply expands the TL text, building into it a semantic redundancy in the original.'[40] Therefore, it seems that even in translation approaches that forgo reception-oriented understandings of explicitation, the concept of translator agency is in part enshrined in the contemporary usage of the term. Any use of the term 'explicitation' must therefore be a deliberate and conscientious one within the bounds of this comparative study. As such, the remainder of this chapter will consciously differentiate between explicitation and translation shifts, where the latter category enables shifts in coherence (whether dissonant or unifying) to function as narrative junctions between the source and target texts, rather than as largely redundant derivations from a source text that 'depend on reception, on reader and [on] translator interpretations.'[41]

Aligning temporal and spatial deixis

Although it is possible to identify distinct markers of temporal and spatial deixis in the grammatical and syntactic shifts from text and translation, it is here that their disparity ends. A comparative analysis of the deictic and demonstrative function of the linguistic markers indicating the physical or spatial location of a given perspective has emphasised their status as interconnected, though not always cohesive, linguistic elements. Yet the demonstrative function of linguistic references to space is as

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[39] Gideon Toury, 'The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, (London: Routledge, 2012), p.216.
[40] Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 'Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation', in *Interlingual and intercultural communication: Discourse and cognition in translation and second language acquisition studies*, ed. by Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1986), p.21; Gabriela Saldanha, 'Explicitation Revisited: Bringing the Reader into the Picture', *Trans-kom* 1.1 (2008), 20-35, <http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd01nr01/trans-kom_01_01_03_Saldanha_Explicitation.20080707.pdf>, [accessed 14 April 2014], (p. 22).
[41] Gideon Toury, 'The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation', p.216.

instrumental in contributing to, and securing, the physical terrain in which the narrative action unfolds as their deictic meaning. These elements, often working in tandem, offer an insight into how the various perspectives explored by the narrative might be implicated in creating relative geographic locations. Grammatical collocations also contribute to the creation of these spaces, introducing a degree of cohesion into the translated text that delineates and differentiates between distinct spatial zones. As such, determining whether a given perspective belongs to the protagonist or the narrative voice in either of the given texts does little to contribute to an empathic mapping of the works. Instead, a comparative analysis of deictic shifts reveals where these perspectives are located in relation to trauma as a temporal and territorial concept.

Physical locations are not objectively and remotely established but experienced, and in most cases inhabited, by distinct perspectives on the trauma. In the source text, these perspectives, though distinct, are cohesive and their occupation of the traumatic moment is explored in both physical and temporal terms. However, in contrast, the addition and manipulation of spatial forms of deixis in translation enables trauma, in the target text, to operate as a temporally and geographically-distinct terrain and experience. It therefore seems logical to assume that this revised deictic positioning of trauma, as a temporal and physical terrain, must therefore impact upon how identities might be located within the text as a whole and, in comparison with a parallel target text, mapped across the translation divide. Moreover, within the framework of empathic unsettlement, the positioning of these identities in relation to one another becomes a pressing issue if they are to connect via veritable empathic means, and particularly if the translation process is to play a role in establishing their proximity to the traumatic event. Creating an empathic map that encompasses both text and translation therefore becomes a process of first establishing where the terrains against which these maps might be drawn are delineated by translation shifts in deictic language. The relative positions that this process of mapping requires are determined by proximity which, in this case, is cast as a traumatised (and traumatic) space or location from which the voice of both protagonist and narrator must determine their distance. However, what spatial deixis cannot account for is the position of these positions in terms of their subjectivity, as individual and empathically-motivated perspectives on and within a traumatic, regardless of its temporal and spatial location.

Perspectival deixis

Perspectival deixis forms the third and final category of deictic shifts in translation that contribute to an understanding of empathic unsettlement as a series of explicit relocations in the target text. What I have identified as examples of perspectival deixis are those instances where the narrative focaliser as a subjective perspective is relocated and manipulated via deictic and pronominal markers. These markers serve as somewhat isolated anchor points in the translation, in contrast to the extensive, more complex and sustained shifts in narrative voice that are observed in other texts in this thesis. In the opening pages of both texts, the protagonist is unnamed and unidentifiable, referred to exclusively via a third person pronoun: 'he' or 'il'. As such, the narrative has no fixed or determinable voice or lens. In the context of the English text, this instability creates a sense of cohesion, if only with the sporadic temporal and ephemeral spatial stability of the narrative, whereby all of these narrative conditions are transient and indeterminate. Deictic language therefore captures the extensive disruptive potential of the traumatic event, illustrating how the temporal, spatial and perspectival staging of empathic encounters is itself disturbed, unsettled and upended.

In contrast to the shifts in temporal and spatial deixis, which find the translated text relocated into a chronological and somewhat stable frame of traumatic experience, the subject remains ambiguous in both source and target text. The protagonist is only identified via impersonal pronouns, and therefore unaffected by the shifts in temporal and spatial deixis that see his world – at least in these terms – delineated into distinct, familiar categories. The destabilising force of the trauma is therefore concentrated on the subject, in a shift towards a compartmentalisation of the traumatic experience that privileges the subjective perspective of the individual. Furthermore, this ambiguity, in contrast to the relative clarity of temporal and spatial categories in the translated text, is itself indicative of a secondary translation shift, whereby temporal and spatial deixis may be viewed as interconnected elements in contrast to that of the subject.

This deixis-led approach to deciphering otherwise subjective narrative positions within the texts is once more brought into sharp focus in the unsettled opening pages of both texts. Walking away from Ground Zero, Keith hears the buildings collapse, and it is noted, either from his own perspective or that of the narrative voice, that:

‘That was **him** coming down, the north tower.’[42]

‘C’était **lui** qui s’écroulait: **la** tour nord.’[43]

Before considering the translated phrase, and how a parallel reading of text and translation informs a reading of the ambiguity of the impersonal pronouns in each, it is useful to decipher to whom the English pronoun ‘him’ might refer. In the source text, two potential subjects are immediately apparent: either ‘him’ is the personified north tower, or it is Keith, hampered by his temporal dislocation and unable to equate his physical escape from the collapsing tower with a psychological break from its traumatic repercussions. Put simply, that was him, *Keith*, coming down. A third possibility has been posited in critical analyses of DeLillo’s novel, most notably by Kristiaan Versluys, who identifies this ‘him’ as Rumsey, the friend whose body Keith is forced to leave behind in tower:

> What seems grammatically incorrect - the use of the pronoun “him” to ostensibly denote a tower – points to a reordering of reality, a shift in reference. At the end of the tale, 230 pages later, it will become clear that what seems an unimportant grammatical slip is the indicant of a repetition compulsion, an obsessive fixation, and, since the referent of the personal pronoun remains cryptic, it also indicates the repression of the traumatic memory, the refusal to remember.[44]

However, I disagree with the suggestion that this ambiguous pronoun foreshadows the traumatic death of Keith’s friend some 230 pages later. Firstly, there is no precedent for this clarity, or at least an instance of unconscious traumatic memory masquerading as narrative foreshadowing, within the cyclic and repetitive narrative structure of the text. The novel’s move towards the ‘revelation’ of Keith’s experience in the towers is foregrounded as the key to unlocking the genesis of his trauma and yet the final scene of the texts restarts the cycle again: traumatic experience is no more than the trigger for the fallout that the novel charts and which, for Keith, seems doomed to repeat itself. The graphic reality of Rumsey’s fate is only revealed at the very end of the novel, as the chronology of Keith’s faux-recovery bleeds into its beginning once more. This ‘grammatical slip’ is only accessible in retrospect; a state of reflection that exists outside of the temporality of the event, and one that the novel distinctly refuses. It is a complete failure to imagine the event in anything but individual terms that fuels Keith’s inability to overcome anything but the physical effects of his trauma: he carries no evidence of the

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[42] *Falling Man*, p.5.
[43] *L’homme qui tombe*, p.12.
[44] Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* (Columbia University Press, 2009), pp.41-42.

collective loss of the towers, and is almost disappointed to have avoided the 'organic shrapnel' of his fellow office workers, or of the hijackers responsible for his apathetic, post-traumatic existence.[45] Therefore, based on the source text alone, I would argue that the non-teleological nature of trauma and the novel's trauma-induced narrative, when considered with Keith's inability to recognise his proximity to a community of fellow victims and survivors at this early stage in the event's aftermath, makes empathic recognition of Rumsey's suffering inaccessible to the protagonist.

More significant still is the translated version of this scene, which offers an insight into a sort of alternate reality in which this scene might unfold. The addition of a colon in the translated phrase operates as a syntactic bridge between the clauses, performing an otherwise implicit (and unproven) link between the two objects of the sentence. Similarly, the translation loses the demonstrative 'that' of the original text, opting instead to shift the deictic meaning onto the emphatic pronominal use of 'lui', which is itself heightened by the reflexive verb form used in French. The precision of these syntactic shifts brings the ambiguous nature of the 'lui' into sharp focus in the second clause of the phrase, bolstered by the use of a colon, presumably to introduce a supplementary or explanatory piece of information, rather than one with which the pronoun must strike a balance. Yet the most telling element of the translated phrase directly follows the colon: the grammatical article 'la' which identifies the tower as a feminine object in the French language. It is not the explicit gendering of the tower that is striking in this example, as the contrast secured by the cohesive colon between 'lui' and 'la' is observable without the source text for comparison. Instead, the notable shift is in how the translation might serve as a sounding board for sorting through the various implied meanings in the source text. The translation immediately discounts one possibility from the original phrase: that 'him' refers to the tower itself as a personified being. However, this is not to say that one should return to the source text and discount this interpretive possibility using the translation as an authoritative interpretation of the source material. While doing so would favour my interpretation of the ambiguous 'lui' as Keith – either through his own compromised vision or that of the precarious narrative voice – finding the meaning of the phrase is not as interesting, nor as important in terms of a comparative analysis, as how a parallel reading of text and translation informs this process of deduction. It is possible that the translation shifts secured in the target text phrase might be used to illustrate how

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[45] *Falling Man*, p.16.

otherwise isolated syntactic and structural shifts expose the crucial points at which source and target text narratives begin to diverge in terms of their deictic positioning and, as a result, in how they locate relative empathic positions and perspective within the text.

Identifying translation 'flashpoints'

The key to a comparative and parallel reading of deictic anchor points relies on their status as interactive, rather than disparate, textual elements. By identifying these linguistic markers of temporality, spatial location and subjectivity as potentially cohesive features of text and translation, it becomes possible to map where the narratives of each overlap, and where they begin to diverge. Perspectival deixis factors heavily in determining these positions, as it is through the compromised gaze of the protagonist that their relative locations are established and negotiated. Yet although Keith's narrative function is that of traumatic witness, shifts in perspectival deixis across the texts suggest that his subjective perspective on the trauma is far from stable. The instability of Keith's perspective, whether conceived in temporal, spatial or subjective terms, is that of an indeterminate 'he' that navigates the traumatic terrain. It is this indeterminacy both within, but more importantly across, the texts that is closely tied to notions of empathic unsettlement where Keith is at once a lens on the trauma, and an empathic position relative to, and in contact with, other positions within the terrain of the traumatic event. In this sense, and certainly across the texts, Keith is at once within the bounds of the traumatic event and, in translation, capable of stepping momentarily outside of its pull.

A comparative reading of text and translation therefore not only sheds lights on the complexities of narrative positions within the world of either text, but also creates a parallel text that itself enacts the possibility of standing both within and outside of a traumatic event. Perspectival deixis contributes heavily to this doubling process, illustrating how a reciprocal reading of source and target texts may form a systematic process of accounting for, and dismissing, potential interpretive possibilities. Yet the result of this back and forth is merely secondary to the relative narrative positions that are revealed in the feedback loop created in this form of reciprocal analysis. It is for this reason that I have referred to examples of deictic language as translation flashpoints. Deictic language exposes how text and translation are conceptualised in temporal, spatial and subjective terms: terms which, in a narrative where subjective positions are rendered unstable and vulnerable by traumatic experience, are themselves made vulnerable to shifts

in cohesion. From this perspective, text and translation enact the process of bearing witness, in that each explores how narrative positions and encounters engendered by a traumatic event are themselves susceptible to manipulation and relocation as a direct result of their positions *relative to* trauma. This doubling of possible perspectives on, and positions relative to, the traumatic event suggests a symbiotic relationship between empathic unsettlement and comparative approaches to text and translation is possible. Within this reciprocal framework, the text and translation, tethered to the same traumatic point of origin, explore the ways in which a narrative might virtually or vicariously inhabit different empathic perspectives on trauma, as well as divergent temporal and spatial locations in varying proximity to the traumatic event. It is with this mapping of cross-textual positions in mind that this chapter will now turn its attention to the perspectives and identities that occupy these relative positions, as well as the empathic encounters in which these perspectives engage.

The subversive potential of empathic gestures

Having established the influence of deictic frameworks of temporality, location and subjectivity on both *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*, the remainder of this chapter will shift focus from deictic constructions of empathy, to forms of empathic subversion. Empathic encounters are, for this analysis, defined by the requirement for reciprocity and exchange between participants engaged in an interaction. Therefore, if deixis consolidates the relative positions of characters and identities within the world of the text, then empathy offers one insight into how these positions might interact and engage with one another in a process that exerts a genuine, traceable influence on the conceptualisation of at least one of the identities involved. With this hypothesis in mind, the remainder of this discussion will test how far empathic interactions might destabilise and subvert the stability, and indeed the restrictions, imposed by the deictic frameworks of text and translation. The most pressing question is that of how a comparative study of text and translation uncovers shifts in empathy, and how far these empathic interactions impact upon, and subvert, static narrative positions that emerge from the deictic paralysis of the traumatic event.

Of the characters of DeLillo's text, Lianne exhibits the most empathic potential in her conscious effort to engage with other characters in order to understand and articulate

her experience of trauma and its effects. However, these intentions cannot be easily articulated as "other-led", just as the empathic structures of the text cannot be accommodated by a binary construction of Self and/or Other. Instead, the question is of how empathic encounters function as a means of converting Lianne's position as vicarious witness into one of empathic connection and experience, where her interactions have the potential to secure the reciprocity required for successful empathic encounters. However, in approaching empathy in this somewhat calculated way, Lianne treads a thin line between harnessing the potential for empathy and the risk of appropriation and proliferating vicarious experiences of trauma and victimhood. Significantly, Lianne, more than any other character, is acutely aware of the deictic manifestations of trauma in the world of the text, insofar as she seeks interactions and connections with those in closest proximity to the traumatic event, beginning with her husband, and 9/11 survivor, Keith. With Keith, sex is explored as an interactive gesture, where intimacy is performed in a domain made public by the pervasive influences of trauma on the domestic realm. Having failed to access the essential facts of her husband's trauma, Lianne returns obsessively to her storyline sessions with a group of Alzheimer's patients. Tasked with encouraging the patients to narrativise their experiences as their lives lose all sense of chronology and linearity, these sessions on 'memorising life experiences' provide Lianne with an opportunity to reinvent her vicarious observation of their trauma and degeneration into an interactive engagement that might inform her own proximity to traumatic experience. [46] Yet the success of these encounters is far from guaranteed, not least in a pair of texts that maintain at their centres a paralysing and obtuse traumatic experience that all concerned struggle to access, whether in deictic or emotional terms. In an attempt to circumvent this paralysis, this analysis foregrounds a comparison of source and target texts as a means of differentiating between interactions that are inextricable from deictic frames of reference, and those with the potential for an empathic and reciprocal connection between distinct identities. Furthermore, this mode of comparison also serves to illustrate how far the texts might stray from their structural foundations, and whether a target text might secure greater, or indeed innovative, forms of cohesion and narrative complexity while working from the same structural map as its original counterpart.

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[46] In translation, the 'storyline sessions' (*Falling Man,* p.29) are *'mémorisations d'histoires'* (*L'homme qui tombe*, p.40) in a translation shift that sees the linearity of the phrase in English interpreted in the target-text as a process of assigning cohesion, and memory, to stories and narratives. Crucially, both texts emphasise the function of these sessions in creating narratives (storylines, *histoires*) that emphasise the connection Lianne seeks to impose between temporality and cohesive traumatic experience.

Intimacy in a world made public

The deictic mapping of temporality, location and subjectivity founded in the opening stages of both texts provides a framework in which the potential for empathic gestures might be tested. In other words, once these comparative parameters for navigating and articulating the post traumatic realm have been set, it is possible to focus on identities, and the interactions that connect and distinguish them, as occurring within this largely fixed terrain. Moreover, such an approach is directly comparable across source and target texts in facilitating the identification and discussion of translation shifts. In a distinctive shift in perspective, the chaos of the opening chapters is immediately succeeded by Lianne's point of view, where the towering, shared trauma of Lower Manhattan is exchanged for a personalised account of the aftermath of trauma in the most individual and intimate of terms:

> Sex was everywhere at first, in words, phrases, half gestures, the simplest imitation of altered space. She'd put down a book or magazine and a small pause settled around them. This was sex...They'd walk down a street together and see themselves in a dusty window. A flight of stairs was sex...the way she gripped his wrist...the tilt she gave her sunglasses…[47]

For Lianne, sex becomes a catch-all term for any gesture that is indicative of a personal, intimate connection or interaction, but that is performed regardless of the distinctions between public and private space. As such, sex is inherently performative, yet it is its empathic potential - the ability for a gesture to instigate or encourage empathic connections between two identities - that has the potential to destabilise the deictic framework that each text creates at its outset. Therefore, though initially static, deictic parameters are not fixed insofar as they might be manipulated and adapted by the empathically-adept characters that navigate the terrain.

Sex is crucial to the process of disturbing and destabilising the deictic markers that exist at once within, and in conflict with, the bounds of temporality and physicality:

> 'It was back there somewhere, **a laying open** of bodies but also of time, the only interval she'd known in these days and nights that was not forced or distorted**, hemmed in by the press** of events.'[48]

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[47] *Falling Man,* p.7.
[48] *Falling Man,* p.69

'Ça se passait en amont quelque part, **un étalage** des corps mais aussi du temps, le seul intermède qu'elle eut connu durant ces jours et ces nuits qui n'eut pas été forcé ou déformé, **pris dans le carcan** des événements.'[49]

Though both texts are bound together by the fundamental image of sex as an act of exposure, the connotations of the first pair of nominal phrases - a 'laying open' and 'un étalage' - are shaped by the collocations they forge with the wider ideas of intimacy and temporality pursued in each text. As such, these shifts cannot be read in isolation but must be considered in relation to the deictic grid of temporality, physicality and subjectivity to which they allude. With the term 'laying open', the source text performs both the implicit and explicit meaning of the noun: casting sex as a form of exposure that is both emotional and physical, in the 'laying open' of either body. The symmetry of the phrase acts as a guide to its interpretation, where the nature of how the physical body might be exposed is indicative of the process enacted on time itself. Yet exposure holds several different meanings in relation to time: exposure as dilation, as the surfacing of its most essential inner workings, or as an insight into how intimate, physical encounters might free time from the pressing, linear structure imposed by the traumatic event. In the source text, each of these interpretations is equally viable, supported by the deconstruction and dilation of temporal structures in the deictic language employed in the opening scenes of the English text. In other words, the precedent set by the fluid, malleable representations of temporality in the novel's opening scene ensures that the multiplicity of this 'laying open' is maintained.

In contrast to the deictic parity maintained in the source text, the translated term 'un étalage' alludes to a representation of intimacy and exposure that is distinctly physical. 'Un étalage' is most commonly used to describe displays and window dressings, and generally those exhibited for a public audience or consumer, as well as encoding a sense of ostentation and of wilful exposure. As such, the scene takes on an exhibitionist quality, where sex as a display takes precedence over sex as a process of stripping back. Even without these contextual connotations, at its most basic level 'un étalage' emphasises the visual and therefore superficial elements of sex, which are themselves linked to issues of performativity and authenticity. In addition, given the symmetrical construction of the phrase, sex also implies 'un etalage' of time, where the temporal is exposed and outwardly performed via intimate, physical means. One possible

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[49] *L'homme qui tombe,* pp.93-4.

interpretation of this shift towards the physical could be aligned with agency, where Lianne and Keith's physical exposure is indicative of their ability to expose and manipulate temporal structures via physicality, thus disrupting time as a fixed concept in both its post traumatic function and as a deictic frame for experience.

The second translation shift secured across these parallel passages offers further insight into how deictic mapping of the texts might infiltrate the narratives of both text and translation beyond the scope of deictic and demonstrative language. In the English and French texts respectively, Lianne describes her encounters with Keith as 'hemmed in by the press of events' and 'pris dans le carcan des événements', that is, 'seized in the straitjacket (or stranglehold) of events'.[50] As is typical of the source text, at least within the parameters set out in the this critical analysis, the balance between the individual aspects of the temporal-spatial-subjective matrix of deixis on which the text is founded is largely maintained. The noun 'time' does not occupy a syntactically-significant position in relation to the French text and so it cannot be claimed that a comparative reading of text and translation informs a temporally-focused reading of the original text, despite the connotations of temporality that are tempting to assign to the noun 'press' in relation to events.

In contrast, the translated text is more selective in the deictic narrative it pursues through the creation of cohesive linguistic links and collocations. Rather than maintaining the neutral deictic implications of the collocation observed between 'laying open' and 'hemmed in by the press of events', the translation favours a physicality-centred perspective on sex and time in the aftermath of the traumatic event. Even without considering the chain reaction set in motion by the use of 'étalage', the translation shift from 'press' to 'carcan' strongly alludes to material manifestations of trauma and prioritises physical confinement over temporal urgency. Although offering multiple meanings - a 'straitjacket', 'stranglehold' or 'confinement' - the connotations of the noun 'carcan' are distinctly material; an interpretation consolidated through the creation of a collocative link with the term 'étalage'. This link not only strengthens the case for understanding the target text as a selective and focused alternative narrative to the breadth of the source text, but also suggests that such a narrowing, when achieved with the support of linguistic collocations and the creation of new semantic fields, might

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[50] Own translation.

contribute to textual cohesion. Therefore, rather than the translated text functioning as an extended form of explicitation – where precision and specificity arise from imprecision in the original work – the evidence suggests that the target text could instead offer a demonstrable form of selectivity that allows for innovation and the exploration of a greater depth of meaning in reaction to the generic content of the source text. This intensification of certain deictic aspects in translation is particularly telling in the case of *Falling Man*, where characters seem to perform extreme points of the empathic spectrum: from a distinct lack of connection and interaction on Keith's part to the overly vicarious approach Lianne adopts in conceptualising her own traumatic experience as a form of crude empathy.

Creating target-text cohesion

The cohesive potential of translation shifts is not limited to purely linguistic elements of text and translation, and can be traced through the structures of both works. It is particularly telling that the deictic framework on which this discussion is conceptually founded is established, in chronological terms, at the beginning of the plot, and subsequently disseminated through both linguistic and structural devices. Yet tasked with articulating and navigating traumatic experience, the extent to which each of the texts engages with, and destabilises, deictic structures also reflects on the complex relationship between trauma and narrative form. In the source text, trauma destabilises the temporal and spatial stability that deictic structures, device and languages ought to represent: their muddied, nonspecific presence is as much a sign of their absence in the wake of trauma. However, in translation, these deictic realms are made specific and increasingly precise and there is certainty to be found in the physical manifestations of trauma and the potential for performativity. In terms of empathy, the extent to which empathic gestures and interactions might perform a subversive deictic function also differs across text and translation. The French text is inherently combative, harnessing the physicality that the traumatic event emphasises as a tool for subversion and dissent, while the English text illustrates how empathic gestures might provide glimpses of authenticity and genuine connection within dominant, trauma-induced frames of reference.

Thus far this analysis has focused on tracing deictic language as a fault line in the texts that is vulnerable to translation shifts. While it is clear that the deictic mapping established at the outset of both text and translation infiltrates the perspective and

interactions of characters, it is possible that this risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby deictic language, due to its prolific presence in the texts, will inevitably be implicated in some aspect of character interaction. Therefore, the remainder of this discussion will ask whether explicit, active engagement with empathy on behalf of the characters is inherently bound up in deictic frameworks, or whether there is a possibility for autonomy and creativity between characters beyond deictic parameters. Mapping the deictic categories of the texts – both respectively and comparatively – provides a frame of reference against which empathic interactions might be compared, and illustrates how deixis might enable encounters and interaction within the world of the text to be deciphered, without limiting the interpretive possibilities of the narratives as innovative, literary forms.

Failed empathic gestures: Possession and appropriation

As her storyline sessions continue, Lianne's efforts to apply narrative forms to the degeneration of the Alzheimer's patients are redoubled via her attempts to couch the experience of the sufferers in chronological, self-aware and essentially traumatic terms. However, Rosellen S. offers an unexpected form of resistance in the subversion of the cohesive and linear forms of experience that Lianne's sessions have come to impose on the group, in their neat though pervasive conversion of experiences of illness into accounts of trauma, overshadowed by the elusive notion of recovery.

> She thought of the language that Rosellen had been using at the last sessions she'd been able to attend, **how she developed extended versions of a single word, all the inflections and connectives, a kind of protection perhaps, a gathering against** the last bare state, where even the deepest moan may not be grief but only moan.[51]

> 'Elle pensa au langage que Rosellen avait utilisé lors des dernières séances auxquelles elle avait pu assister, **à la manière d'une rassemblement contre** l'ultime dépouillement, quand même le plus profond gémissement n'exprime peut-être pas la douleur mais lui-même seulement.'[52]

What is most striking in these parallel passages is the significant absence of specificity in describing Rosellen's use of language in the translated text. In the source text, as her Alzheimer's reaches its latter, most severe stages, Rosellen's language becomes increasingly inventive, temporally fluid and extensively connected: features which she

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[51] *Falling Man,* p.156.
[52] *L'homme qui tombe*, pp. 186-7.

deliberately 'develops', and which are therefore not imposed upon her narrative through Lianne as traumatic mediator. Indeed, Lianne's role in the storyline sessions is of increasing significance as Rosellen's condition deteriorates. Rather than the sessions offering a narrative and therefore defined medium for self-expression, Lianne readily converts experiences of Alzheimer's into narratives of trauma (facilitated by her adolescent memories of her father's own battle with the disease and subsequent suicide), casting herself as traumatic mediator and gatekeeper. Rosellen reseizes a degree of agency, returning to language and form as a means of performing the multiplicity and resistance that Lianne can neither comprehend nor possess as outsider and witness.

However, despite the reassertion of Rosellen's agency, albeit impaired, Lianne's mediatory presence in the passage is still clearly discernible, as this linguistic invention is framed as a form of 'protection perhaps, a gathering against' the inevitability of death. What is interesting, particularly when considered as a kind of collocation with the missing clause in the French text, is the reduction of these interpretive options to a single translation: 'rassemblement'. The option of using language as a subversive or protective force is lost in favour of a rallying or gathering – an accumulation of some form – that implies numeration but not multiplicity in the same spirit of synonymy and experimentation as is articulated in the source text. In many ways, the target text circles back to the same simplistic, deictic trajectories and distinct empathic identities established at its beginning, where the lack of linguistic inventiveness or resistance – as an alternative to conventional narrative and therefore traumatised methods – points to a failure of empathic recognition on Lianne's behalf and contributes more generally to the relentless pace of degeneration, woven throughout the novel.

Yet cohesion is more wide-reaching in its effects than these collocative and deictic consistencies suggest. This discussion has consistently sought to illustrate how multiplicity and synonymy in *L'homme qui tombe* are not necessarily derivative translation techniques, of explicitation for example, but are indicative of the inception of new contextual and linguistic features that enhance the cohesion of either text as autonomous literary works. Yet stepping back from the textuality of the works for a moment, it is possible to see how a comparative analysis of text and translation creates a feedback loop, where characters seemingly perform the same subversive or cohesive functions as the translated text itself. For example, in the passage above, Rosellen

embodies and performs a form of linguistic multiplicity and synonymy that resists linear chronology and subverts the deictic structures to which she is otherwise subordinated. As a character, she resists appropriation through the inception of her own form of counter-narrative, yet also acts as an echo of the critical perspective of this very analysis, where subversion, whether translational or empathic in nature, is considered as a force for reprocessing – though never quite escaping – trauma. Rosellen executes her own form of escape, however small, from a text plagued by repetitions and relived experiences, and by experiencing futility, rather than the possibility of recovery, finds a way to isolate trauma as a deictic and destabilising force.

The case for semantic cohesion as a textual, and translation-bound, feature that is independent of explicitation is further strengthened by the continuity, both in terms of plot and language, that translation shifts introduce in the translated text. In addition to the resistance of subversive deictic measures, it is possible to draw concurrent links between the narrative of possession and exposure set in motion by the translation shift from 'laying open' to 'étalage' earlier in the narrative, and Rosellen's 'rassemblement' against her demise. The two French terms may be aligned with a wider, cohesive narrative on possession and dispossession with which the target text engages: the translated text seemingly performing the same dispossession with which Lianne's empathic endeavours continually flirt. In terms of wider plot devices, possession and materiality consistently arise in both texts as a means of asserting agency, if only limited, in response to the traumatic event. Keith, failing to carry any physical evidence of his traumatic experience in the form of organic shrapnel becomes fixated on the briefcase he unknowingly rescued from the North Tower: an artefact that leads him to embark on a sexual relationship with another survivor. Similarly, Lianne's vicarious experience of Alzheimer's, through both her father and the group, only consolidates her outsider status as witness and observer. She cannot occupy and possess these stories any more than a physically-recovered Keith might hope to bear a visible or tangible reminder of his traumatic experience. Both pursue the possibility of bearing some sign of trauma: Keith continues his wrist exercises long after his injury is healed, while Lianne recites numerical games and problems despite her doctor's insistence that she bears none of the markers of a neurological disease. However, these broad-brush attempts at possession are easily adopted into temporal frames of interpretation, just as the specificity with which Rosellen's degeneration is represented in the source text is pursued using temporally-indicative language. In contrast, the

'stripping' that her degeneration and anticipated death entails speaks to the agency and possession that Lianne herself has struggled to secure, in an empathic gesture whereby Lianne attempts to articulate Rosellen's experience through her own post-traumatic gaze, for ultimately self-reflective, and therefore vicarious, purposes.

One of the consequences of framing identities and perspectives in deictic terms is the creation of distinct narrative locations for each. While empathy has the potential to bridge the gap between these fixed positions - each of which is negotiated in relation to a shared traumatic event - they risk being ultimately defined by their relative difference. If a true empathic connection is to be forged between two identities, the key is securing a means of exchange and reciprocity, which recognises the differences of the two positions, while allowing a mutual experience of interaction. However, whether influenced by the overarching deictic structures of the source text, or by the discourse on possession and materiality that is most pronounced in the translation, the success of empathic encounters hinges on how, and indeed if, each text is able to clarify the notions of difference on which textual identities are founded.

The deictic difference - be it temporal, spatial or perspectival - between distinct identities in the texts is, in some instances, represented as a binary relationship, where the transfer of an experience from one agent to another entails a sense of opposition. However, as the target text has often illustrated, these conflicting positions are not always represented in equal deictic terms in translation, as in the following example:

'"This is for them…It's **theirs**. Don't make it **yours**."'[53]

'"Tout cela est pour eux…C'est à **eux**. Ne vous en **emparez** pas."'[54]

In the translated passage, the focus of the phrase shifts from the binary construction of the source text pronouns - arising from both their symmetrical construction and syntactic position at the end of each phrase - to the action of the French verb 's'emparer'. Meaning to seize, capture, conquer or to take possession, the verb emphasises the untenable relationship between the two empathic positions outlined in the original text, where ownership of an experience cannot belong to both. The risk, although never fully realised, is that Lianne's vicarious approach to witnessing and participating in trauma, as it is experienced by the Alzheimer's group, may cross the line between voyeurism and

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[53] *Falling Man,* p.60.
[54] *L'homme qui tombe*, p.75.

dispossession. Yet it is only together that the source and target text complete the equation for deciphering the empathic potential of the interaction: the former identifying the agents or actors while the latter shifts focus onto the process that implicates the two distinct positions. In this instance, a comparative analysis of the texts is truly reciprocal, where both perspectives are needed to build a full picture of the empathic potential encoded in each text.

The almost-empathy of *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*

Ultimately, although Lianne's encounters have the potential to foster empathic connections across fixed deictic positions, the vicarious and self-serving motivations of her encounters ensure this empathy is never secured. Lianne's experiences of trauma, and of the trauma of the other, are consistently vicarious and resist reciprocity. This lack of empathic exchange is, in part, fuelled by the static conceptualisation of identity and their positions in the world of the text that the deictic framework of each text enables. In terms of empathy, this deictic framework leaves little room for equality for those implicated in the given interaction: seeking to understand traumatic experience via appropriation entails the dispossession of the other, just as the degenerative progress of the Alzheimer's group feeds into Lianne's increased sense of emotional agency. Yet despite these intentions, Lianne is never successful in her attempts at appropriation in the form of understanding and articulating other-experienced trauma: a failure communicated in deictic terms.

In translation, empathy still fails, but not as a result of its problematic status in relation to temporal and spatial locations. Instead, the target text explores the role of performativity and physicality in empathic relationships, as markers of materiality and possession; ultimately returning to the overriding criteria for agency in empathic interactions. Although Lianne shows some progress in her ability to recognise the potential for reciprocity in empathic interactions, her understanding of other identities and their traumatic experiences is confined to her grasp of agency as a one-directional gesture. Caught in a rush of pedestrians in New York, Lianne reflects on a similar experience as a young woman in Cairo:

> What she began to feel, aside from helplessness, was a heightened sense of who she was in relation to others, thousands of them…she was who she was in relation to others, thousands of them…she was forced to see herself in the reflecting surface of the crowd. She became whatever they sent back to her. She became her face and features, her skin colour, a white person, white her fundamental meaning, her state of being. This is who she was, not really but at the same time, yes, exactly why not…[55]

The start of Lianne's account of her experience in the crowd holds much promise for an empathic gesture: there is a recognition of otherness, but crucially of her identity in relation, and response, to such difference. However, the crowd simply provides an impervious reflective surface that converts Lianne's appearance into an reductive concept of ethnic identity. Once again, Lianne's conceptualisation of self is informed by the position of the other, but does not interact with such an identity in a reciprocal manner: it is not empathic interaction that leads to her observation but the performance of superficial, visible roles. The one key difference between this interaction, and those guided by the appropriation of experience elsewhere in the text, is that the other occupies an unreachable position: the crowd reflects Lianne's image, but remains unchanged and untouched. Yet this conclusion is only available due to a lack of empathy, and the distinct absence of the possibility of connection and interaction with an other so different from Lianne's sense of self.

Prioritising agency as a factor in empathic encounters also ensures the peripheral function of secondary, satellite characters is maintained across the translation divide. Within the texts, all three of the characters after whom each section of the novella is named - Hammad, Martin Ridour/Ernst Hechinger and David Janiak (the Falling Man performance artist) - occupy positions in varying proximity to the traumatic event, and yet are only perceived in vicarious terms. Martin and the Falling Man force Lianne to confront performative embodiments of trauma, whether through staged performances, the figures of the Twin Towers in the Morandi paintings, the faded passport photographs of Kommune 1 members, or in the superficiality of their aliases. One of Hammad's primary narrative functions is as an exaggerated version of the empty empathic function observed in other peripheral characters, inhabiting a static position within both texts against which other responses to trauma and its consequences are measured. His empathic function, or the potential for him to fulfill such a role, is not articulated textually, and so even a

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[55] *Falling Man*, p.184.

comparative analysis of his narrative role struggles to account for how his distinct 'otherness' is manifested in empathic terms. In a novel and translation where the grounds for empathy are established based on deictic forms of proximity to the event, the 'otherness' that Hammad represents ideologically is not realised in textual, and therefore measurable or comparable, terms, thus rendering his empathic function in both narratives negligible. As Hammad's mentor Amir observes:

> 'The others only exist only to the degree that they fill the role we have designed for them. This is their function as others.'[56]

> 'Les autres n'existent que dans la mesure où ils remplissent le rôle que nous leur avons assigné. Telle est leur fonction en tant qu'autres.'[57]

Yet far from articulating the role of their potential victims, Amir captures his function, and that of Hammad, as an empathic stand-in: a narrative position that is not articulated in relation to the centrifugal, and deictic, force of the traumatic event, and that is therefore absent from the empathic structures and interactions pursued in both texts. It is for this reason that this analysis has chosen to prioritise other empathic agents as potentially subversive forces against restrictive, deictic measures of trauma and proximity, rather than falling back on reductive binary constructions of Self and Other as a tool for mapping empathy. The closed nature of this, and other narrative positions that exist outside of the texts' textual structures for empathy, ultimately results in the shutting down of empathic potential, where deictic frameworks, as well as a consistent discourse on agency and possession, are seemingly incompatible with the reciprocity that genuine empathy requires.

Conclusion

The first step in establishing a comparative approach to *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* is to uncover how the basis for empathy and reciprocity is constructed across text and translation in its most basic form. Exposing how the text and translation are conceptualised in temporal, spatial and perspectival terms tests the viability of empathic unsettlement in its most literal sense: mapping the terrain in which identities and interactions are fixed before their potential for unsettlement via empathic

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[56] *Falling Man*, p.176.
[57] *L'homme qui tombe,* p.227.

encounters can be addressed. Crucially, one of the strengths of a comparative study of deixis across text and translation is that it liberates readings of disturbances in temporality, space and perspective from the trappings of plot and instead offers an insight into how these deictic frames are constructed textually, as well as their wider repercussive effects and cohesive function. The translated text not only provides a second terrain against which shifts in deixis can be located in proximity to a shared traumatic centre, but also creates a cross-textual interaction that itself has the potential to secure the same reciprocity that is promised in the empathic interactions within each text. The result is a systematic form of textual analysis where shifts in translation are indicative of the deictic construction of each text which are themselves bound up in the possibilities of representing trauma as a textual phenomenon.

With an established empathic map of deixis for both text and translation, it is possible to explore how far narratives might virtually or vicariously inhabit different empathic perspectives on trauma, and whether the empathic intentions of those implicated in interactions are performed and articulated textually. Crucially, Lianne's interactions lack reciprocity as well as any indication that she is able to distinguish between an individual and their traumatic (or trauma-related) experiences, the latter conflated to provide irrefutable evidence of victimhood. It is these victims to whom Lianne can then claim proximity: a kind of spatial and temporal kinship that allows their experience of trauma to inform and influence her understanding of her own. Despite their vicarious function, the potential for empathy is ever-present in such interactions: the explicit deictic language of the texts making clear the opportunity for shared terrain or equal proximity to the traumatic event. Yet this clarity of positioning is never realised as reciprocity, and the stability of temporal, spatial and perspectival deictic forms are reflected in the empathic paralysis of DeLillo's characters.

Much more than DeLillo's text, the translation unravels the complex repercussive relationship between trauma, its deictic representation and empathy. By introducing spatial specificity where the English text favoured indeterminacy, chronological experiences of trauma and delineated spatial terrains, the empathic failures of the French text arise from a more clearly defined post-traumatic realm than its counterpart. Yet deictic congruence, and the wider textual cohesion with which it is aligned, does not entail simplification, nor does it match with conventional forms of translation

explicitation. Instead, the creation of innovative target-text narratives of possession, appropriation and intimacy challenge the deictic categories that the translated novel so clearly defines. The result is an alternative view on trauma: an insight into how applying order and clarity to the chaos of the post-traumatic realm exposes the complex nature of empathy and victimhood. Echoing Martin's observation that 'you build a thing like that so you can see it come down', the clarity with which the target text is deictically mapped emphasises the disastrous fallout of failed empathy and vicarious victimhood as a form of recovery from trauma.[58]

Mapping empathy both within and across the texts has revealed how fundamental deictic structures underpin the potential for empathy and reciprocity: a crucial factor if the text and translation are to be comparatively analysed as parallel counterparts in the creation of textual empathy. As well as emphasising the potential for reciprocity in interactive and empathic gestures, this comparative form of analysis has exposed the mechanisms of empathic failures on both texts, where deictic forms result in a mode of stagnation and paralysis that makes empathic unsettlement, and the transience of perspective required for virtual empathy, impossible. While the translated text consistently pursues deictic specificity, establishing chronological and quantifiable measures of time that seemingly undermine the novel's exploration of the disorienting effects of trauma, these translation shifts do not serve as redundant explanations of imprecise or implicit information in the source text. However, they do make explicit the chronological and causal elements of time, as well as the distinction of spatial locations and subjective perspectives, that traumatic experience lacks but seeks to establish. Moreover, the creation of deictic consistency introduces an element of certainty that allows for wider narrative and thematic innovation – introducing concepts of intimacy, performativity and possession – that see trauma manifested in actions and process, rather than the paralysed states of the original text. As a methodological endeavor, empathically mapping text and translation has allowed for a systematic analysis of these texts as parallel works of fiction, that explores empathy as a textual, and essentially translation-bound, concept. The result mirrors the same reciprocity upheld by the empathic potential of the texts: an innovative reading of the source text that allows for target-text innovation

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[58] *Falling Man,* p.116.

without reference to translation strategies that result in the subordination or over-compensatory assessment of translated works.

Overall, this analysis has exposed the mechanisms of empathic failures in both texts, where deictic forms result in a mode of stagnation and paralysis that makes empathic unsettlement, and the transience of perspective required for virtual empathy, impossible. However, empathic potential is never fully realised in either text, and though the deictic structures for reciprocity are in place, the texts are ultimately restricted by the paralysing deictic effects of the trauma they strive to represent. Yet despite their empathic failings, *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* provide an excellent baseline for an empathy-led comparison of 9/11 texts and translation on which the remainder of this thesis will build. This discussion has begun to illustrate how shifting the translated text into a position of reciprocity, that is itself of equal proximity to the traumatic event shared by both texts, creates the possibility for innovative critical perspectives of 9/11 novels, their translations, and their engagement with empathy as a means of navigating and mediating traumatic experience. *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe* are confined to basic empathic structures, their pessimistic outlook on the post traumatic realm confined to vicarious traumatic experience, appropriation and witnessing. Therefore, with the empathic potential of the vicarious victim established, this thesis will next turn to attempts to diversify and problematise victimhood, and the complex empathic pathways that such multiplicity introduces into a comparative form of textual analysis.

The Submission, Un Concours de Circonstances and the Empathic Limits of Aftermath

More than any other texts in this thesis, Amy Waldman's 2011 novel, *The Submission*, and the French translation of the work, *Un Concours de Circonstances,* are suspended in the restless and indeterminate temporality of aftermath. However, aftermath is far from the staging ground for the dislocation and unsettlement of empathic identities that one might expect. Instead, with the traumatic event relegated to a temporal realm beyond their limits of sight, Waldman's characters instigate and consolidate hierarchical structures of victimhood, as a coveted terrain for legitimising post-traumatic identity. This chapter will explore how far empathy is manipulated as a gateway criteria for admittance into privileged forms of victimhood, and instrumentalised in the fracturing of identity into marginalised and restrictive categories of entitlement. In another of the empathic echoes performed by the comparative analysis of texts and translation, this discussion will also explore how far translation - as an enactment of the same temporal dilation and reinvention with which the novel grapples - might intervene in the combative and competitive ambitions of those characters seeking to reinstate binary categories of inclusion and exclusion. Offering a unique counterpoint to DeLillo's *Falling Man*, *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* explore the "dark side" of empathy, displacing narratives of recovery and reconciliation in favour of competitive and reactionary approaches to aftermath and the wilful manipulation of empathic structures.

Legitimising post-traumatic identities

The Submission charts the fallout of a "blind" competition to design and build a memorial at the site of a terrorist attack in New York: an event that, in all but name, is a fictionalised 9/11. The winner Mohammad Khan, an American-born Muslim, is the Maya Lin of post-9/11 America, only here the controversy that surrounded the Chinese-American architect's design for the Vietnam Veteran's memorial is replaced by fears that Khan's memorial – The Garden – is a tribute to the Islamic paradise revered by the terrorists responsible for the attacks. Khan's winning submission, selected by an elitist jury, is soon leaked to the press, and the novel charts the city's subsequent descent into political protest, dissent and islamophobic violence. Khan's eventual downfall is told through a multi-vocal narrative, from which Waldman selects six key perspectives: Mo

(The Architect), Claire (The Widow), Paul (The Chairman), Alyssa (The Journalist), Sean (The Brother) and Asma (The Immigrant). Inextricably bound together by the attacks – a connection prolonged by the delaying effects of aftermath – the construction of the memorial promises to make permanent and tangible the otherwise waning connections between the immediacy of the traumatic event and the identities forged in its wake. Yet the memorial offers much more than a marker in the languishing temporal field of aftermath. As a visual representation of trauma, it has the potential to function as a second, centrifugal traumatic centre, from which the proximity, legitimacy and entitlement of increasingly fractured forms of victimhood might be negotiated.

In his study of *The Submission*, as a fictional representation of 'post-9/11 conflictedness…that has the dialectical opposition between trauma and politics at its heart', Arin Keeble sets Michael Rothberg's work on multidirectional memory at the novel's core.[1] For Keeble, 'the rhetoric of multidirectionality becomes a key tenet of *The Submission's* counternarrative', as the novel exposes the hypocrisy and destructive potential in competitive forms of memory.[2] Rothberg sees the two concepts as diametrically opposed:

> Against the framework that understands collective memory as competitive memory – as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources – I suggest that we consider memory as multidirectional; as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing; as productive and not privative.[3]

As Rothberg admits, the key challenge in securing a multidirectional view of memory is in articulating collective suffering and trauma where more than one group, narrative or history of victimization is implicated. While Keeble prioritises the novel's topical engagement with wider political, racial and cultural debates, this chapter will focus on the structures of competitive memory in the texts, and consider how far empathy is subverted and dismantled by the privative aims and ambitions of individuals. In many ways, the texts can be read as a counterpoint to the function of empathy in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and *L'homme qui tombe*, where empathic structures are deliberately manipulated to serve the divisive aims of Waldman's characters in legitimising their status and claims on commemoration in the aftermath of trauma. Moreover, I will argue that the texts displace

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[1] Arin Keeble, *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2014), p.165.
[2] Ibid., p.168.
[3] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.3.

narratives of recovery and reconciliation, and instead test the limits of the very criteria on which empathy is founded: an expansion of empathic mapping that is amplified and problematised in translation. To a certain extent, empathic gestures are no longer harnessed as productive and connective forces in *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances*, but instead serve as gatekeeping devices for privileged and exclusionary categories of identity.

The temporal field of text and translation are crucial to establishing the grounds for inclusion and exclusion, as navigated in both texts via empathic gestures and the subsequent construction of empathic hierarchies. Both texts are firmly anchored in the aftermath of the traumatic event which, by the end of the novel, has stretched some twenty years beyond the memorial competition. Yet despite the painstaking chronology that traces the fallout of Mo's selection, the novel's explorations of memory and identity are anachronistic, insofar as they exist in response to, yet always outside of, the traumatic moment. In this sense, the immediacy of traumatic impact and experience is beyond the "limits of sight" established in both texts: a temporal distanciation that has significant effects on how characters negotiate their identities in proximity to the traumatic event. This dichotomy is unique to *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances*, where the distinct, repercussive effects of trauma cannot be aligned with its temporal immediacy and impact. As the temporal expansion of the novel takes characters ever further from the conditions in which their post-traumatic identities were forged, the memorial – as representation and embodiment of the traumatic event, not least given that it will be built at the site of the attacks – takes on renewed significance in legitimising their proprietary claims on grief, commemoration and victimhood.

As characters seek to legitimise their post-traumatic identities at an increasing temporal distance from the event, *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* foreground competitive notions of entitlement as the catalyst for differentiating between privileged empathic positions and their dispossessed counterparts. Throughout the novel, characters grapple with the contentious issue of who might stake the greatest claim on commemoration, and how their entitlement might be justified and measured. In this sense, Waldman's novel and its translation problematise and extend the deictic categories established in the previous chapter for mapping empathy. In addition to the proximity of the individual to the traumatic event – whether physical, temporal, or ideological – are those criteria for inclusion fostered by pervasive, public narratives on grief: familial

connection, fiscal or institutionalised power, and more abstract notions of moral privilege and cultural ownership. Rather than establishing empathic positions in relative deictic terms, this network of identities – as a kind of dysfunctional post-traumatic community – acknowledge their shared empathic terrain, yet ruthlessly contest the rights to its occupancy. Moreover, the integrity of the traumatic event as a singular and centrifugal centre is also compromised, and finds itself doubled in the creation of a memorial that occupies the same geographic location, and which seeks to represent the original trauma. The Garden is to inhabit the site of the disaster: the centrifugal centre of aftermath transformed into a potentially-centripetal force for commemoration and memory. The result is the creation of two competing centres: one that lies beyond the reach of the texts, back in the immediacy and onslaught of the traumatic event, and another that will be constructed over the course of each narrative.

Characters explicitly compete to legitimise their identities and empathic status through the negotiation, manipulation and differentiation of states of victimhood, via a series of 'submissions' that punctuate the progress of each text. These submissions – the literal submission to the memorial competition, Claire's eventual submission to the expectations of her as Widow, the misguided perception of the Islamic veil as a form of subjugation (to name but a few) – divide the novel's cast into two combative groups: those forced to submit, and those to whom submission is expected. The challenge that this conceptualisation of identity poses for an empathic approach to texts and translation is glaring: the submissions that the texts pursue are founded on a series of binary categories of difference that an empathic reading of texts and translations has deliberately sought to resist. The interactivity that allows for empathic reciprocity within and across source and target texts is made manifest in Waldman's novel and its translation, where characters seek to discredit, rather than appropriate, what are essentially shared experiences of trauma. In truth, Waldman's characters seemingly reject empathic unsettlement as a vehicle for recovery and reconciliation, swapping productive and affective forms of empathy for modes of differentiation, submission and hierarchy. Rather than seeking to appropriate the traumatic experience of others, characters compete for ownership over a terrain that has the potential to subvert empathic structures and deictic models: that of memory, and of the commemoration of trauma within the unstable temporal field of aftermath.

In another echo of the empathic doubling that this comparative form of text-

translation analysis enacts, both source and target text are directly implicated in the challenges of representing and remembering trauma with which the characters themselves grapple. Waldman's text is itself a fictional representation of traumatic experience and memory, extended by a translation that participates in the same temporal extension and border-crossing that the novels' characters attempt to resist. While all of the texts in this thesis inevitably extend the temporal field of aftermath, *Un Concours de Circonstances* best performs the multidirectionality that Keeble and Rothberg find in wider, politicised narratives on memory and victimhood. Therefore, with each translation shift uncovered in this analysis, it is worth considering how far the reciprocity of text and translation undermines the exclusionary categories of agency and empathy established in the texts, and where the subversive potential of the translation process introduces innovate readings and complexities to the discussions of identity and difference with which the texts grapple.

Adopting victimhood into a hierarchal structure of post-traumatic identities and statuses is bound up in notions of agency, where characters wilfully manipulate empathic structures to exclude and categorise identities, and to control their access to competitive forms of memory. This chapter will test how far empathic gestures, or the wilful manipulation and subversion of empathic structures, divide identities on the basis of belonging and inclusion. Moreover, if this process of differentiation is inherently empathy-led - where the legitimacy of one experience of trauma is weighed and measured in direct response to another - it will be vulnerable to shifts in translation, or so this comparative analysis of *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* seeks to demonstrate.

As one might expect, the hostile means of conceptualising inclusion requires the construction of various undesirable or unacceptable qualities that determine an individual's exclusion: a differentiation that, in both texts, is bound up in notions of nationhood and national identity. Through a nation-centric framing of matrixes of inclusion and exclusion, the texts perform, almost to the point of satire, the wider discourses of critical and literary responses to 9/11. Immediate reactions to the September 11th attacks, as well as subsequent attempts to articulate their enduring cultural and historical significance, were widely unanimous in their treatment of the attacks as a collective and national trauma. For some, 'the 9/11 attacks were an assault on our buildings, our people, our way of life, our society'; for others, they were an act of

violence against 'the high gloss of our modernity…the thrust of our technology…the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life and mind.'[4] Despite the opacity of such a concept, 'quintessential American values' were framed as the primary targets of the terrorist attacks, in a narrative that located the trauma as an intensely-American event.[5] Further to these overarching, public discourses on American identity, scholars have also underlined the significance of the damage done to the internalised construction of the American condition or psyche in the private domain of the individual. 'There is clear evidence that the…attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon had both immediate and long-term effects on the American psyche', in a pseudo-psychological narrative echoed by literary theory Neil Leach, for whom the event 'struck at the very heart of the American psyche, since it was an assault on one of the very iconic references around which an American way of life has been formulated'.[6] Conceptualised as a distinctly national trauma, and as attacks against the very values or qualities that are intrinsic to an American image of nation and self, these narratives have contributed to an overall glossing of victimhood in the aftermath of 9/11, and a conflation of private and public narratives of grief, identity and belonging, that are relentlessly interrogated in *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances.*

In response to the creation and proliferation of a catch-all sense of victimhood in the wake of 9/11, critics have pinpointed a general failure of literature, whether fictional or critical, to 'properly differentiate between differing levels of exposure to loss, preferring instead to embrace the appealing vision of an America united' by a national and 'collective trauma'.[7] Moreover, these generalised categories of identity endure beyond the immediacy of the event, facilitated by a widespread 'fascination with ideals of liberty and freedom [that] extends across 9/11's memorial culture, and helps place stories

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[4] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman and Ramila Usoof-Thowfeek, 'Shifting Moralities: Post-9/11 Responses to Shattered National Assumptions' in *The Impact of 9/11 on Psychology and Education: The Day that Changed Everything?* ed. by Matthew J. Morgan et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.81; Don DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future', *Harper's Magazine,* December 2001.
[5] Lucy Bond, 'Compromised Critique: A Meta-critical Analysis of American Studies after 9/11', *Journal of of American Studies*, 45.4 (2011), 733-756, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0021875811000934> (p.745).
[6] Linda J. Skitka et al. 'Dark Clouds and Silver Linings: Social Responses to 9/11' in *The Impact of 9/11 on on Psychology and Education: The Day that Changed Everything?* ed. by Matthew J. Morgan et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.63; Neil Leach, '9/11', *diacritics*, 33.3 (2003), 75-92, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/dia.2006.0010> (p.85).
[7] Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Richard Gray. American Literary History', 21.1 (2009), 152-158, < http://muse.jhu.edu/article/257854/pdf > (p.153); Bond, 'Compromised Critique', p.744; Janoff-Bulman and Usoof-Thowfeek,' Shifting Moralities', p.81.

of personal loss into a wider discourse firmly rooted in a nationalist sphere.'[8] Yet it is the potentially limitless temporal field of aftermath in which the counternarrative to this vision of memorial culture is staged in the novels, allowing creative, literary engagement with notions of differentiation, commemoration and entitlement. Both the traumatic event and the memorial, which would see aftermath made tangible and permanent, are beyond the temporal gaze of the texts: the latter exists only as a series of architectural drawings until the novel's final scene sees it transposed into an ornamental garden in the Middle East. Moreover, while both texts intervene and problematise external discourses on the homogeneity of victimhood, it is the translation process that performs and extends multiplicity, and which has the potential to dismantle and destabilise those notions of identity built on exclusionary and manipulative forms of empathy.

In addition to nationalistic formulations of inclusion and exclusion, this comparative analysis seeks to trace the construction and manipulation of identities – and the need to legitimise these empathic positions – by focusing on the ongoing dialogue between the texts and wider notions of agency and impotence. In another of the dichotomies explored in both texts, characters consistently attempt to gain and exercise dominance, as a means of seizing agency from those marginalised identities that the process of commemoration and historicising trauma threatens with impotence. This ongoing struggle against a process that promises agency, while eroding the ability of the individual to act in the face of totalising conceptualisations of identity, entitlement and tolerance, is manifested in the submissions that punctuate the trajectories of both texts. While some characters submit, others seek to consolidate their agency and dominance over empathic relationships, establishing privileged empathic positions from which others must negotiate subordinate identities and accept 'illegitimate' notions of victimhood. In addition to more explicit acts of submission, this chapter will also explore how sex, sexual desire and objectification see insecurities surrounding agency and impotence made manifest, particularly for male characters, and how translation shifts, as vehicles for overt sexualisation and the amplification of inequality in sexual relationships, intervene in the power relations of the original text.

Yet agency can only be obtained and exercised as unseen characters are made visible: a process of unveiling that is both figurative and literal, and that sees these

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[8] Bond, 'Compromised Critique', p.745.

characters exposed to the empathic structures for inclusion, exclusion and submission. While other 9/11 novels compulsively return to images of the destruction of the towers – where 'one arrested moment stands in metonymically for the whole horror' – no such visual representation exists in Waldman's novel, nor do characters grapple with the repercussions of having directly witnessed the traumatic event, as the cast of the texts comprises neither survivors nor explicit voyeurs.[9] Instead, this analysis will develop a comparative and critical analysis of translations shifts invested in the visual realms of the texts, and how visibility, set against an invisible counterpoint, performs the same border-crossing as the translated text.

The Paradox of Agency in *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances*

It is particularly significant from a comparative perspective that both *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* should explicitly engage with notions of agency and empathic efficacy. As established in the introduction to this thesis, contemporary discussions surrounding literary translation are increasingly invested in recovering evidence of translator agency and strategy from target texts. While this study has resisted such models of interpretation, the two texts in this chapter explicitly test the limits of agency within an empathic and traumatised environment, and where the legitimacy of each identity is forged on the grounds of its empathic efficacy in suppressing or dispossessing another. In this sense, reciprocity is converted into a give-and-take scenario, where any gain must be compensated with a loss of equal value or status. While such an exchange could never be described as veritable empathy, it is the presence and pervasive empathic structures on which the texts are built that enable such a process to take place, as instigated and secured by those characters well-versed in empathic manipulation and interaction.

The temporal field of aftermath is instrumental in framing discussions of agency as, in the case of *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances*, the immediate and lived experience of the traumatic event is entirely absent. Although causality and chronology – upheld by the narrative structure of the texts – ensure the traumatic event is located along the same linear timeline in which the novels participate, its position is never accurately indicated or secured. As such, the temporal connection between victim –

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[9] Linda S. Kauffman, 'World Trauma Center', *American Literary History*, 21.3 (2009), 647–659, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajp015> (p.652).

stratified by proximity and notions of entitlement – and the event is destabilised, and Waldman constructs an insular microcosm where identities perform, and are subjected to, totalising narratives and discourses of difference that have run rampant in the aftermath of the attacks.

In one of the few scholarly discussions of the novel, Amir Khadem interprets the failure of individual agency as a symptom of the futility of individualism in the face of the discursive power of the many, where:

> Mo, Claire and Asma, all within their own paradoxical conditions, try their best to escape the confining modes of thought that surround them, and each tries to do so by adherence to the social values they uphold, unaware of the fact that the problem lies in the incongruity of those values.[10]

In each of these cases, characters struggle to assert any meaningful kind of agency over the identity and role in which they have been forcibly cast by the traumatic event. Mo is forced to inhabit a fluctuating, interstitial space between identities that are consistently constructed as binaries – American and Muslim – and yet is prevented from taking ownership of either. He is well-educated, well-dressed, with a long list of girlfriends of varying ethnicities, and yet his name and religious heritage (he is entirely secular) prevent him from securing either identity in the eyes of wider society. Meanwhile, Claire's idealistic values of tolerance, acceptance and liberalism are exposed as fundamentally untenable with her role of widow, and with the status and institutionalised power that her position ensures, and that she readily wields in her interactions with Mo. Yet Claire's status as victim does not extend to include Asma. An illegal immigrant, whose husband is killed in the attacks, Asma is silent (and silenced) for the majority of the novel, by the status her own community imposes through its wider expectations and restrictive roles. What Khadem frames as a well-meaning adherence to social values, this chapter will frame as empathic agency, and a wilful manipulation of the deictic and empathic structures that otherwise maintain stable, empathic positions in proximity to the traumatic event. For each of these characters, the memorial functions as a second, centrifugal and traumatic force, and yet its artifice – as a kind of traumatic red herring – is well-known to all. As Claire acknowledges in the opening scenes of the novel:

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[10] Amir Khadem, 'Paucity of Imagination: Stereotypes, Public Debates and the Limits of Ideology in Amy Waldman's *The Submission'* in *Representing 9/11: Trauma, Ideology, and Nationalism in Literature, Film, and Television*, ed. by Paul Petrovic, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), p.77.

> Tomorrow, absent the memorial competition, her life would lose its last bit of temporary form. She had no need of income, given her inheritance from Cal, and no commanding new cause. Her future was gilded blankness…The Garden was an allegory. Like Cal, it insisted that change was not just possible, but certain.[11]

Ultimately then, each character faces their own submission: whether to misinformed political correctness, to the reality of a timeframe beyond that of trauma and its immediate repercussions, or to the destructive forces of differentiation, exclusion and prejudice. It is only Asma's death that allows her to attain a permanent and irreproachable level of victimhood, transcending the hierarchies of identity that seek to divide and stratify vicarious, voyeuristic and contagious experiences of trauma. Ironically, her fate is sealed by her attempts to seize a degree of agency and visibility in the public domain: it is only when made visible that she is forced to submit to the totalising structures of the terrain into which she has strayed.

Deciphering 'submission'

Agency and impotence exist as two sides of a coin: diametrically opposed yet separated by the smallest of margins. The translation of the novel's various instances of submission expose the possibility of oscillation between these two conditions, in a series of translation shifts that begins with the title of the works. Indeed, the translation of the novel's title, from *The Submission* to *Un Concours de Circonstances*, marks one of the most significant translation shifts across the texts, and sees the title completely transformed despite the equivalent polysemy of the word 'submission' in both languages. In the most literal sense, the titular 'submission' refers to Mohammad Khan's anonymous submission of a memorial design – The Garden – to a "blind" jury tasked to find an appropriate means of commemorating the victims of an unidentified terrorist attack. Yet Mo's selection triggers a chain reaction that will ultimately reveal his true submission to be to the external pressure, criticisms and prejudiced assumptions levelled against him as an American-Muslim, and his winning design, as a 'martyrs' paradise'.[12] Mo ultimately fails to escape this confinement, and although the novel gestures towards reconciliation in the creation of a retrospective documentary on the memorial some twenty years on, the infringements on Mo's identity – on his values, intentions and very authenticity as an individual – are never rectified. It is only in hindsight that the novel's title acts as a

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[11] Amy Waldman, *The Submission* (London: William Heinemann, 2011), p.11. All subsequent references to the novels will refer to this edition.
[12] *The Submission*, p.116.

sinister foreshadowing of Mo's downfall, and as a stark warning of the risks of conflating representation and reality in a post-traumatic realm that cannot separate the individual from wider conceptualisations of identity, community and the criteria for admittance and inclusion into the inner-circle of American belonging.

A literal translation of the title to *La Soumission* would succeed in capturing this double-meaning, and yet the French novel is entitled *Un Concours de Circonstance*s, indicating a transformative and potentially empathic shift from source to target text. This phrase is particularly difficult to articulate in English, given the implicit meaning that the expression carries in French. Two interpretive possibilities exist; the first emphasising the unpredictable outcome of such a 'concours':

> 'un ensemble de circonstances qui, ensemble, contribuent à quelque chose de façon **non prévu**.'
>
> [a group of events or circumstances that, together, contribute to something in an **unforeseen** way]

In this sense, 'un concours de circonstances' refers to a series of events or coincidences; a chain reaction that brings about an unplanned, or unforeseen, event or effect. Other definitions further highlight the role of chance, or causality, in the convergence of the facts or circumstances themselves:

> 'rencontre **le plus souvent fortuite** de divers évènements' or 'un coïncidence heureuse ou malheureuse de faits'[13]
>
> [a **chance** meeting of different events; or the fortunate, or unfortunate, convergence of facts]

The title of the French text therefore favours progression and causality, and foregrounds the unravelling of events throughout the novel as a whole, rather than the two submissions that bookend the narrative (Mo's submission to the memorial competition and his eventual defeat). When read comparatively, the two titles capture the two temporal fields at war in the texts: the discrete and intense temporal impact of the traumatic event, as a punctuation mark in the wider chronology to which the texts belong; and the protracted, unrestricted field of aftermath that is largely untenable with progressive and discrete measures of time. Moreover, by eschewing the translation of the novel's 'submissions', effectively reducing the character's empathic influence, the phrase

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[13] 'un concours de circonstances, nom masculin', *LaRousse Online;* 'concours de circonstances, locution', *Dictionnaire français sur L'Internaute.*

'un concours de circonstances' exercises the same emptying of agency that subsequent translation shifts will seek to secure. Whereas an act of submission requires empathically-connected participants, given the relocation of identities that the process ultimately secures, 'un concours de circonstances' is effectively agentless, and emphasises the influence of causality and convergence within a given set of environmental conditions. The French title therefore foregrounds the possibility of futility and a totalising impotence felt in the wake of the traumatic event, where both individuals and communities are unable to intervene in the perfect storm that the conditions and consequences of the memorial competition concoct.

This reading of the novel's title is supported by the translation of the various submissions in the text, which allude to the inefficacy of empathic gestures and individual agency within the temporal field of aftermath. Throughout both texts, Mo consciously performs and subverts the roles and stereotypes forced upon him, acquiescing to images of the 'safe Muslim' in the photograph he submits to the memorial competition, before sardonically growing-out his beard in the public fallout of his win.[14] In an interesting overlap with the language of this comparative analysis, it is Sean who recognises the duplicity in the conflicting roles and empathic positions occupied by each character, including himself:

> 'All these doubles. He couldn't get a fix on anyone…His empathy kept settling in new, unstable places. It – he – couldn't be trusted.'[15]

> 'De tous ces doubles, il ne savait lequel était **le plus authentique**…Son empathie allait sans cesse se nicher dans des endroits nouveaux. Il n'était pas digne de confiance.'[16]

In translation, empathic instability is aligned with questions of authenticity, in a shift that emphasises the significance of visible, concrete evidence as a marker of reality in the world of the text. This process of doubling performs empathic multiplicity: characters adjust and reinvent visible aspects of their characters in order to manipulate and traverse the empathic identities and structures that ultimately govern their access to a legitimate, post-traumatic status as victim or commemorative instigator. Yet as this process of reinvention takes on a repetitive, almost ritualistic quality, Mo is forced to confront where

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[14] *The Submission*, p.177.
[15] *The Submission*, p.233.
[16] Amy Waldman, *Un Concours de Circonstances,* trans. by Laetitia Devaux (Paris : Points, 2013), p.371. All subsequent references to the novels will refer to this edition.

he might fit within the prescriptive, overarching narratives that dominate the post-traumatic city. In the scene that concludes the main section of the text, Mo enters his local mosque:

> But today, the Afghan, deep in his prostrations, did not acknowledge Mo, even as together they formed a line, a wall, a mosque; he cared not at all for Mo's judgement. He had **forgotten** himself, and his was **the truest submission.**[17]
>
> Mais ce-jour-là, l'Afghan, tout à sa prostration, ne fit absolument pas attention à Mo, même si, à eux deux, ils formaient une ligne, un mur, une mosqueé. Il se moquait du jugement de Mo. Il **ne pensait plus du tout** à lui, et c'était ça, **le véritable abandon**.[18]

In the original text, the extent of the pervasive reach of hierarchical models of identity is revealed: even in the mosque, worship is framed as a form of submission and effacement of the individual. The empathic positions of this religious terrain are particularly difficult to identify, in a space where proximity and shared, ritualistic behaviour cannot be equated with the potential for empathic reciprocity and interaction. As the translated text clarifies, only 'eux deux' – Mo and the Afghan – are needed to form 'a line, a wall, a mosque', and yet this combinatory force and equality is not secured via an empathic gesture, as the Afghan ignores and dismisses Mo's attention. Crucially, by 'forgetting himself', the Afghan relinquishes his identity and individuality: the ultimate form of impotence and moral compromise for Mo. In this sense, 'all those doubles' that saw Mo propelled through a series of reinventions and manipulations have ended too far from their beginning, and the line that joins this present self with that of the past is all but lost. It is interesting that this linear chronology is framed as a failure of memory: Mo's gaze is fixed back on the traumatic event from which a trajectory of identity and submission cannot be coherently traced. Therefore, Mo has not only failed to escape the totalising structures of identity of the post-traumatic realm, but also the nostalgic, backwards gaze of aftermath that only fuels its indeterminate reach. In contrast, the relinquishment of identity in translation is framed as a liberating act of 'abandon', resisting the inherent oppression and compromise in the act of submission. Moreover, this translation shift marks a distinct temporal break from what has come before: the Afghan '**no longer** thinks of himself' and, rather than failing to recall his past selves, moves into a timeframe where such identities are no longer relevant. Therefore, while the culmination of the original text looks back into the aftermath of the traumatic event, the target text looks forward, gazing

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[17] *The Submission,* p.28.
[18] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.447.

out into a new temporal field that relinquishes the structures and identities of the past. At the beginning of the novel, Claire wistfully acknowledges that 'aftermath has to end' and it seems that, at the conclusion of the memorial competition, Mo's ability to resist the totalising effects of aftermath in translation may offer an opportunity to bring the period to an end.

Agency and Impotence: Sex and the limits of agency

If the translation of *The Submission* attempts to renegotiate submission as a potential moment of securing agency for marginalised characters, the overt sexualisation of the target text explores the impotency and failed agency of their empathically-dominant counterparts. In translation, sex and sexual desire serve as vehicles for harnessing agency and asserting dominance over other characters, whose identities hinge on their access to legitimate forms of victimhood and commemoration. In this sense, although this discussion will focus mainly on male desire, it will not consider the wider gendered nature of such interactions. Instead, sex – as an empathic interaction – will be explored as a form of empathic objectification and suppression, and as an attempt to destabilise the same empathic hierarchies that these individuals otherwise uphold.

This is particularly true of Sean, a hostile family member, memorial opponent and the instigator of the attacks or 'unveilings' of Muslim women in the wake of Mo's selection by the jury. Sean's sexual fantasies are consistently framed as a struggle against his impotence and his inability to earn the same status of his firefighter brother who, having been killed in the attacks, is promoted to an unobtainable level of victimhood by the exceptionalist narratives on trauma and patriotism that border the texts. Of particular note is how the translation navigates those grammatical and linguistic elements of the text that perform the same oscillation between agency as impotence as experienced by the characters. For example, in his objectification of Claire, it is the positioning of grammatical objects in the descriptions of his fantasies that offer a glimpse of Sean's underlying insecurities and impotence:

> 'He projected Claire like a movie onto the ceiling of his bedroom…**he undressed her like his niece's paper dolls**, took her every way he could think of…'[19]

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[19] *The Submission*, p.87.

> 'Il avait projeté Claire comme un film au plafond de sa chambre…**Sean la déshabillaient comme ses nièces déshabillaient leur poupées de chiffon** et il la prenait de toutes les façons imaginables…'[20]

The shift in the positioning of the subjects and objects of Sean's fantasy is subtle: in the translated text, Sean's nieces undress their dolls, but in the original text, this clarification is not made. This hint at the possibility of Sean's more perverse sexual desires is later confirmed, as his relationship with his girlfriend's underage daughter is revealed to the reader. The introduction of a second subject in the French phrase is not strictly necessary, and although clarifying the possession and direction of agency in the scene, it also absolves Sean of any sexual deviance. However, in delineating agency, it is also limited, and the French text is clear on the boundaries of Sean's ability to influence real-world individuals, rather than make-believe women and dolls. What remains constant in both texts is the essential impotence in Sean's fantasises, for it is only when transformed into a one-dimensional, consumable image, projected into the ceiling of his bedroom as he lies in bed, that Claire can be objectified, pinned down, and suppressed.

The translated text shunts the implicit references to agency in the original text into the explicit and measurable realm of the visible, and clarifies the relationship between subjects and objects as a means of testing the viability and authenticity of agency. In another of his fantasies involving Claire,

> He had also been imagining her naked upstairs, eager for him, **Sean**. The fantasy of drilling himself into her was so arousing, **given her proximity** that he could have hurled that rock just for release. It wasn't new to him that **anger** and sex lived inside each other, but he'd never felt them pair with such force.[21]

> …mais il l'imaginait surtout nue à l'étage, burlant de désir pour lui. L'idée de la pénétrer était si excitante, qu'il aurait pu jeter ce caillou uniquement pour **se soulager**. Ce n'était pas la première fois que sexe et **violence** se mêlaient **en lui**, mais il ne jamais ressenti cela de façon aussi forte.[22]

In the English text, Sean's physical proximity to Claire makes his fantasies all the more tantalising, and draws on the deictic structures of proximity, intimacy and familiarity on which the success of such an empathic transgression would normally hinge. Yet this phrase is deleted in translation, and the emphasis shifts onto the verb 'pénétrer', as a more nuanced rendering of the crude 'drilling into' in the English text that alludes to a form of

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[20] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.145.
[21] *The Submission*, p.233.
[22] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.372.

invasion and potential possession that arguably extends beyond the sexual. When paired with the second shift secured in the passage – that sex and violence (rather than anger) exist inside him, rather than each other – that the translation further clarifies that these thoughts are Sean's own, rather than more abstracted comments on the combinatory force of sex and anger. Similarly, the addition of a reflexive verb form – **se soulager** – ensures that Sean is at the epicentre of this passage, in a translation shift that doubles as an explicit reference to masturbation. Although the French text clarifies the limits of Sean's empathy, it is telling that both scenarios are imagined and stage a series of empathic encounters that will never be fulfilled. Sean creates an image of Claire with which he might interact, but ultimately frames these interactions as a form of physical and sexual aggression, and as a means of violating a character who, in her cultivated status as widow, has greater access to legitimate forms of grief and commemoration that the disappointing brother of a lost fireman.

Throughout the French novel, the translation amplifies what, in *The Submission*, are implicit references and allusions to sexual desire and dominance, through the recurrent image of penetration. While references to Sean's sexual desires seem to illustrate the translation's engagement with agency, the sexualisation of Mo's character in the French novel arguably alludes to a more complex discussion surrounding the nature of invasion and otherness. This analysis has avoided the binary of 'Self/Other' thus far, as such a distinction is easily conflated with the novel's staging of real-world political and cultural tensions. However, unlike in Sean's case, references to Mo's sexual agency tend to be articulated by, or in direct response to, other people, setting up the potential for sex to be framed as an empathic gesture. Meeting Mo for the first time, Claire confesses that, with his memorial design, 'I felt like you **got inside** my head': a form of penetration that resurfaces later in the novel as Claire's 'buried attraction' manifests in a sexually-charged dream about Mo in The Garden.[23] The French text is much clearer on the sexual nuance of this exchange, as Claire describes how the architect '[avait] **pénétré** mon esprit'.[24] Staged against the backdrop of a visual representation of trauma, Mo's penetrative force is converted into an empathic gesture: his invasion of a state of identity that is distinct from his own is framed as a means of interaction and exploration, rather than a combative form of possession to which Claire is forced to submit. Although contradictory to Sean's

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[23] *The Submission*, p.112; p.198.
[24] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.184.

failed attempts at exerting sexual agency, both shifts belong to a cohesive narrative in the translated text, where the nature and direction of agency are consistently clarified and articulated in language that more explicitly links to notions of proximity and distance.

Elsewhere, the image of Mo's penetrative agency re-emerges, casting the architect as an increasingly invasive trespasser on identities and communities to which he is otherwise denied access. As Mo struggles to reseize snowballing narratives on his memorial design, the chairman of the memorial committee, tells Mo that 'you've got to go into the heart of the opposition'. Yet the transgressive potential of such an action is rendered as an invasive form of penetration in translation - 'il faut que vous **pénétriez** le cœur de l'opposition'- in a translation shift that is all the more pronounced in the context of the Mo's ongoing abstinence during Ramadan. [25] In another scene, Mo's potential agency takes on a more insidious and threatening tone:

> 'There's this primal feeling in my gut saying 'No', to it, even though my brain is saying 'Yes' – sort of like when you think you want to have sex with someone and your body won't cooperate…It's like I've been **invaded**.'[26]

> 'C'est comme si un cri primal dans mon ventre disait "non" alors que mon cerveau dit "oui". Un peu comme quand vous avez envie de faire l'amour avec quelqu'un, mais que votre corps en a, lui, très envie…J'ai l'impression d'avoir été **envahie**.'

In translation, this image of invasion – and its pairing with explicit references to sex, sexual agency and more sinister forms of sexual dominance – is part of a wider, coherent narrative regarding Mo's agency. The consistency of such references also resists appropriation into chronological or developmental narratives that would see these instances cast as revelatory moments of unprecedented agency, as is the case in the English text. Instead, Mo is suspended in the temporality of the target text, the inefficacy and repetitive nature of his actions, and their reception, emphasising the futility of any attempts to assert control over the 'concours de circonstances' that steers the narrative towards its conclusion.

By sexualising Mo, the translation engages more directly in a discussion of sexuality and agency that is independent of the cultural and socio-political identities imposed on the texts by contextual or reception-led approaches. Mo's sexual agency is fundamentally opposed to Sean's perversity, the latter emptied of any empathic potential

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[25] *The Submission* , p.187; *Un concours de circonstances*, p.302.
[26] *The Submission*, pp.125-6.

through a process of objectification and the desire for destructive forms of submission. Yet by overtly sexualising Mo in translation, the target text directly intervenes in the construction of chronological narratives of causality, and in the reductive fracturing of the text into binary constructions of identity. The inclusion that Mo and Sean both seek through their penetrative and possessive endeavours is closely aligned with notions of legitimacy and entitlement, and both characters have been dispossessed and largely silenced by dominant forms of representation. Yet by playing more explicitly with notions of invasion and trespass, the translated text conflates the nationalistic rhetoric that would see Mo, and his memorial design, excluded on the basis of his non-conformity to the ideals of commemoration that characters such as Claire ultimately uphold. In this sense, the translation foregrounds what are implicit, even allegorical, references to the traumatic event, and participates in the novel's wider, ideological impetus to conflate and test the limits of agency in the face of totalising narratives on identity and belonging. Though present in the original text, these references are made explicit and visible in translation.

<u>The limits of visibility in text and translation</u>

Translation shifts often mark a moment of significant transition and transgression, where implicit or unseen aspects of a source text are made visible, and placed in sharp focus in the target text. This border-crossing, from the unseen into the visible and visual realm, is all the more pertinent in the case of 9/11 fiction, and critical discussions of the genre have highlighted the tendency of these works to foreground an 'investment in the visual', in a return to the oft-cited significance of the attacks as an unprecedented visual spectacle. Katalin Orbán summarises:

> the images of the attacks have allowed the kind of limited witnessing characteristic of real-time coverage (involving temporal but not spatial presence) and their effectiveness in shaping the event raises the question of whether this global spectacle functions as the primary, though problematic, mode of witnessing this event. [27]

The Submission and *Un concours de circonstances* directly intervene in this problematic framing of victimhood, and grapple with the repercussions of pervasive representations of trauma and commemoration where the veritable, traumatic event exists beyond the temporal limits of both texts. The characters in the texts are not simple voyeurs of the

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[27] Katalin Orbán, 'Trauma and Visuality: Art Spiegelman's Maus and *In the Shadow of No Towers*', *Representations*, 97.1 (2007), 57-89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rep.2007.97.1.57> (p.70).

original trauma, but seek use the memorial of the attacks – as a visual representation and physical embodiment of the significance of the traumatic event – as a measure of entitlement and legitimacy. As such, characters need a reference point for the monopolising forms of victimhood they seek to secure for themselves; a form of tangible and irrefutable evidence that legitimises the post-traumatic identities forged in proximity to the event. The visual realm is paramount to this endeavour, where representations of trauma are bound up in notions of authenticity, converting loss and grief into a demonstrable, physical form of commemoration.

Locating 'the dead' in translation

The distinction between the visual realm and the spectral presence of the unseen is crucial to interpreting the "limits of sight" in both texts. Both text and translation not only engage with prominent public discourses on the prevalence of the traumatic image, but also seek to expand the empathic limits of the post-traumatic terrain into unseen and uncharted territories. At the very start of the novel, the identity of a concrete, yet unseen and unobtainable, group is established: that of the victims of the attacks. If the identities of the texts can be understood as a hierarchy, with each tier denoting access to increased agency and legitimacy in proximity to the memorial itself, then the victims of the attacks exist at the apex of such a structure. Subsumed within a catch-all sense of victimhood, characters compete to secure the relevance and agency of their roles in the aftermath of the events, particularly as the traumatic event, and its representation, is converted into a medium that looks out beyond the centrifugal force of the attacks. As the widow of one of the victims, Claire Burwell inhabits a privileged form of victimhood that risks appropriating veritable experiences of trauma, while seeking to establish a definitive identity for the community to which she belongs, and that she represents, on the jury: 'Us: the families of the **dead**. Only she on the jury stood for Us.'[28] References to the victims of the attacks as 'the dead' are fairly consistent in the English text, constructing a definitive group and identity that are at once absent from the text, yet granted permanence through the empathic hierarchies that the texts construct. However, in translation, the term undergoes several shifts, each problematising the relationship between the otherwise devolved realms of the visible and the unseen, and the discourses on authenticity with which these categories are aligned.

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[28] *The Submission*, p.4

'"Nous: les familles des **disparus**. Elle était la seule dans le jury à voter au nom de ce "nous".'[29]

This translation shift – literally translated as 'the disappeared' – explodes the interpretive possibilities of what, in the original text, was a closed identity, and could here mean 'the disappeared', 'the missing', 'the lost', even 'the victims' or indeed 'the dead'. By shifting between absence and the invisible, the translation offers the possibility of recovery: the indeterminate nature of 'les disparus' occupying an interim space between the definitive, visible states of absence and presence. 'Les disparus' secures two distinct translation shifts in perspective.[30] First, this translation dilates the temporality of the work, the two texts oscillating between the permanency of loss and absence, and the indeterminacy of disappearance, across the translation divide. Equally, this shift is directly implicated in expanding the temporal and visual limits of the target text. Referring to the dead as somehow 'missing' or 'disappeared', emphasises their invisibility, and shifts away from their definitive status in the original text. Moreover, the term subverts the temporal location of 'the dead' as fixed, permanent, and outside of the linear progression of change that the novel seeks to trace. This is not to say that the translation suggests that 'the disappeared' may return from the dead. However, in a text that compulsively returns to modes of representation as the centre of the post-traumatic realm, it explicitly ushers the possibility of the unseen – as a counterpoint to the visibility and authenticity of the world of the texts – into the fold.

Yet the most prevalent translation solution for 'the dead' in the French text is 'les victimes', in a shift seeks to dilate and expand the temporal limits of the target text futher, by reaching back to the attacks themselves. 'Les victimes' not only attempts to appropriate the indeterminacy of the field of aftermath into a linear chronology of cause and effect, but also returns to a troubling question of agency, and to what the dead may have fallen victim. In the source text, 'the dead' is used consistently, regardless of an individual's empathic proximity to the event. For Mo, 'the names on The Garden's walls…they were the **dead'**, in a statement that conflates the aesthetics of commemoration and traumatic representation with the trauma itself. [31] While this transformative gesture grants a degree of permanence to the dead, it is their status as victims that is rendered all the more permanent in translation, where 'les noms sur les

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[29] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.15.
[30] *The Submission*, p.70, p.77, p.111, p.112, p.140.
[31] *The Submission*, p.112.

murs [étaient] des noms des **victimes'**.[32] Even for the grieving Asma, whose husband Inam was killed in the attacks, The Garden promises to commemorate 'Inam and the other dead', while the translated text frames the memorial as a site '**consacré** à Inam et aux autres victimes'.[33] While Asma's narrative is aligned with the wider rhetoric of religiosity that defines her voice in the text, the difference that this translation shift explicitly performs ensures that, as a practicing Muslim and illegal immigrant, she is placed outside of the boundaries of inclusion and privilege that Claire enjoys. Again, with this translation shift, the target text cultivates more explicit narratives on the complex nature of victimhood that its English counterpart, foreshadowing what is otherwise an abrupt reference, later in the text, to the memorial site as 'hallowed ground' or 'une terre sacrée'.[34]

These translation shifts offer an interesting insight into how temporality is conceived in the novel, and where the translation process is able to intervene to enact the same form of dilation it secures by participating in the aftermath of the real traumatic event itself, and to subvert and destabilise the linearity of the target text. As Claire admits in the opening pages of the novel that 'aftermath had to end', and it could be argued that the use of the 'dead' introduces a degree of permanency and temporal stability that resists the temptation to renegotiate the boundaries of identity in the wake of trauma.[35] In contrast, the translated text not only introduces the possibility of an aftermath that, in its connections to the traumatic event and therefore to the memorial, is seemingly without end, but also gestures to a second, invisible terrain forged in the aftermath of the trauma that exists outside of the temporal and empathic structures of the narrative. Although not realised to the same extent as in other novels in this thesis, most notably in *The Zero* and *Le Zéro*, *Un Concours de Circonstances* does gesture toward the possibility of an empathic terrain that is at once liberated from the restrictive hierarchy of empathy that its characters construct, and located beyond the reach of pervasive, public narratives on representation and commemoration.

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[32] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.185.

[33] *The Submission*, p.99 ; *Un concours de circonstances*, p.164.

[34] *The Submission*, p.131; *Un concours de circonstances*, p.213.

[35] *The Submission*, p.11. No equivalent term for 'aftermath' exists in French, and so this phrase is rendered as 'les conséquences de l'attaque' (*Un concours de circonstances,* p.26). This translated phrase has the potential to destabilise the argument this chapter has made in favour of the translation's subversive force on linear models of causality and chronology. However, this translation solution is not a translation shift: it emerges from linguistic constraints that require the target language to articulate a term that does not exist in the French language. Therefore, though interesting, this example cannot be considered as a translation shift according to the criteria set out in this thesis, and has therefore not been included in the paragraph above.

<u>Translating 'fellow Americans'</u>

In a novel obsessed with notions of inclusion and entitlement, the elusive quality of 'Americanness' is upheld as a benchmark for belonging and as a gatekeeping device for those wishing to legitimise their experiences of trauma and subsequent post-traumatic identities. The crisis is consistently framed in relation to the nation-state: an 'attack on America' or, more explicitly, 'contre' (against) the nation, executed by 'America's enemies.'[36] Moreover, the humanitarian quality of the tragedy is supressed in favour of a nation-centric version of events, that itself conflates American identity with a catch-all sense of victimhood:

> 'You couldn't call yourself an American if you hadn't, in solidarity, watched your fellow Americans being pulverized, yet what kind of American did watching create? A traumatized victim? A charged-up avenger? A queasy voyeur? Paul, and he suspected many Americans, harboured all of these protagonists.'[37]

The language used by characters to justify and legitimise their own participation in the traumatic event, if only as vicarious and voyeuristic 'victims', circles abstract and arbitrary criteria for 'Americanness' and belonging. Such terms are not only bound up in empathic constructions of how one identity enters into a dialogue with another, but are also mapped in proximity to the translation event, and are therefore susceptible to shifts in translation. A comparative translation analysis has revealed that these linguistic elements belong to two categories: the construction of the American identity as a hostile, bordered territory, and the use of pronominal phrases in articulating notions of belonging and exclusion.

The shifts secured in the translation of the term 'un-American' are indicative of the construction of American identity as a hostile domain in the target text, where any divergence from the values and qualities attributed to such an identity are regarded as an act of wilful defiance. Literally defined as a state of being that is 'not in consonance with American characteristics', to be 'un-American' also carries a pejorative sense of somehow deviating from, or consciously offending or opposing, those unseen, though seemingly omnipresent, values, 'ideals and interests of the United States of America.'[38] It is the second of these definitions that is most vulnerable to shifts in translation, where the translated text directly intervenes in the conflict between the visible and unseen states of

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[36] *The Submission*, p.80; *Un concours de circonstances,* p.134 ; *The Submission*, p.5.
[37] *The Submission*, p.13.
[38] "un-American, adj." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

identities and empathic terrains. Sean condemns the apparent hypocrisy of the memorial jury, who 'call us (those opposing The Garden) **un-American** and then take away our free speech', drawing on a narrative of constitutional rights and values that are distinctly American.[39] The target text erases the pejorative meaning of the phrase, and instead reiterates the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion that are set out elsewhere in the text: excluding Sean as a '**non**-americain'.[40] In the source text, conflict is couched in nationalistic terminology and hostile linguistic constructions, which see American identity conceptualised as a set of values to which a totalising definition of otherness is set in opposition. In contrast, the translation destabilises the central position that American identities assume in the original text and introduces two identities that, though distinct, are not contradictory or conflicting.

However, prefix shifts are not governed by a lack of lexical options in French, as the following example illustrates, in a translation shift that conflates the state of *not* belonging with that of alienation, exclusion and opposition. 'Walled gardens are **un-American'**, argues one critic of the memorial at a public forum, 'or – I dislike that phrase – perhaps '**not American**' would be better': a statement that consciously differentiates between the pejorative sense of the adjective from its literal meaning.[41] In contrast, the French translation amplifies the potential opposition and hostility of the speaker, articulating concepts of American identity from a privileged 'insider' perspective: 'Les jardins clos **ne sont pas américains**, ils sont même…'**antiaméricains'**.'[42] Here, the memorial is not seen to be inspired by influences that simply exist outside of American traditions, but is seen to directly oppose, contradict and reject those values. In translation, interior and exterior spaces are once more cast as deliberately inclusive and exclusionary terrains, inherently discriminatory in their engagement with representations of national identity as a privileged and protected form of victimhood.

It is worth noting that American identity, as it is framed in the texts, is not countered, or indeed threatened, by a second geographically-constructed, nationally-influenced or stable identity. Instead, American characters, whether explicitly or by subversive means, seek to frame 'radical Islam – naked, radical Islam – [as] the enemy'.[43]

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[39] *The Submission,* p.132.
[40] *Un concours de circonstances,* p.215.
[41] *The Submission*, p.222.
[42] *Un concours de circonstances,* p.354.

enemy'.[43] In a narrative that perpetually conflates non-American values with anti-American intent, and national identity with religious and ideological values, characters that are somehow outside of American identity are cast as 'opponents' or 'adversaires' of the nation-state.[44] Crucially, although the two shifts outlined above differ originate from semantically-distinct phrases, their illocutionary force in translation is the same: the first opting to make visible the otherwise implicit borders between American and non-American identities, while the second frames identity as a contentious staging of those attributes denoting inclusion or exclusion. In both cases, the French translation favours visibility, and sees American characters participating in the creation of restrictive and exclusionary criteria for nation-centric forms of identity and victimhood.

<u>Pronouns in translation: Negotiating 'Us and Them'</u>

The construction of American identity as a unified collective, benefiting from a systematic process of segregation and rejection of any non/un/anti-Americans values, is also encoded and amplified in the translation of pronouns. Throughout the texts, pronouns are indicative of the communities to which identities claim allegiance and solidarity, and are used as a means of consolidating nation-centric identities. Crucially, the victimhood of characters included in such communities – Claire, Paul, the wider memorial jury, and even members of the memorial opposition such as Sean and Debbie – is automatically legitimised in comparison to that of their non-American counterparts, and these individuals wield a degree of agency to which other characters may be forced to submit. For example, in a similar vein to his earlier American and exceptionalist view of victimhood, Paul cautions Mo against 'tearing **your** country apart', yet frames the nation as a terrain in which Mo may participate and claim belonging.[45] However, in translation, the nation is refigured as '**notre** pays' - our country – in a shift that introduces the possibility of a space and identity that fundamentally divides the men and excludes Mo. It is particularly significant that such shifts are aligned with proprietary debates concerning space, as it is the concession of terrain to The Garden – as an insurgent territory in the heart of Manhattan - that poses an insurmountable obstacle to Mo's memorial bid. Already susceptible to a shift in translation, as an explicit reference to a potentially shared space and identity – the target text exploits the potential double meaning in Paul's

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[43] *The Submission,* p.41.
[44] *The Submission*, p.138; *Un concours de circonstances*, p.225.
[45] *The Submission*, p.65.

statement, and once again attributes a geographical, nation-centric construction of belonging, and of nationhood, to the perspective of an American character. In contrast, Mo resists nationalised concepts of identity and belonging: his fellow 'countrymen' become his 'concitoyens', in a shift that sees identity converted into a potential shared position of citizenship that is not preface an American adjective.[46] It would be short-sighted to interpret this shift as an attempt, on Mo's part, to align himself with the novels' non-American identities: such an assumption would only enact and enforce the same exclusionary and binary categories of identity as the novel's more hostile characters. Instead, as an extension of the pronominal shift outlined earlier, the term 'concitoyens' sees identity converted into a potential shared position of citizenship, framed in relation to proximal identities who, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or religion, are admitted into a shared identity based on a shared geographical and potentially empathic terrain.

To return momentarily to Claire's proclamation of her participation in another of the novel's collective identities, a comparative analysis of text and translation reveals how pronominal shifts might respond to shifting notions of allegiance and empathic positioning. Claire confidently aligns herself with an irreproachable 'Us: the families of the dead', where the capitalised pronoun is indicative of the definitive position of privilege and communality that this genre of 'victims' occupies. [47] Yet the French translation not only erases the capitalisation of the proper noun, but also diminishes its significance as a singular identity, introducing 'ces' as a demonstrative and deictic adjective : 'Nous: les familles des disparus. Elle était la seule…à voter au nom de **ces** "nous ".'[48] Moreover, as a plural form – where 'ce' would refer to a singular object or entity – the translation rejects the homogeneity of the term as a marker of a singular, cohesive identity. With 'ces', the translation gestures towards a collective that comprises distinct individuals: a far cry from the solidarity and allegiance that Claire seeks to demonstrate in the original text.

Yet despite her claims of solidarity, Claire's position is far from static, and she struggles to perform and reconcile her late husband's tolerance with her growing suspicion surrounding the values of the memorial and its architect. As her defence of The Garden crumbles, so too does her ability to distinguish herself from a more pervasive and

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[46] *The Submission*, p.201.
[47] *The Submission*, p.4.
[48] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.15.

exclusionary 'Us':

> 'Followers of your religion have caused enormous pain. Caused me enormous pain. And for **all of us**, it's very difficult to sort out what Islam actually means or encourages.'[49]

> 'Des adeptes de votre religion ont causé des douleurs atroces. M'ont causé des douleurs atroces. Or, **pour nous tous**, il est extrêmement difficile de comprendre ce que signifie exactement l'islam et ce qu'il prône.'[50]

The capitalised Us of the opening pages is lost, and replaced with a secure a catch-all sense of victimhood that seeks to present a united front against the perceived enemy. Though the phrase is rendered literally in translation, the shift from 'ces nous' to 'nous tous' sees this collective identity re-centered, and forced into a centrifugal position from which others must negotiate their difference or congruence. In the epilogue, Claire's transition into an exclusionary category of identity and victimhood, unencumbered by notions of familial or empathic proximity to the event, is complete. Twenty years on from the memorial competition, Claire seems to have escaped aftermath as a temporal terrain to be navigated in traumatic terms, and admits that: '**we** were in the grip of some frenzy' - '**nous** étions pris dans un frénésie' – as the competition unfolded.[51] When considered as cumulative translation shifts, rather than isolated and synchronic translation solutions, it is possible to trace the divergent trajectories of text and translation through the function of pronominal language. In the source text, Claire moves from a capitalised and singular 'Us', to an alignment of this identity with wider conceptualisations of belonging with 'all of us', ending with a generic 'us' that sees these boundaries and distinct empathic positions ultimately erased. In contrast, the translation moves from the multiplicity of 'ces nous', to a subsequently ambiguous 'nous tous' and culminates in a 'nous' that converges with its source text counterpart. Such narrative trajectories can only be established via a comparative analysis of text and translation which, in this instance, see Claire's inability to resist totalising definitions of victimhood explored in translation as a gradual move inwards, from a marginalised empathic position to a centrifugal identity.

Elsewhere, the translated text continues its isolation of American identities as an exclusionary 'We/Nous', through a series of translation shifts that see any references to marginalised non-American and Muslim identities as a collective 'we' replaced with

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[49] *The Submission*, p.270.
[50] *Un concours de circonstances*, p.429.
[51] *The Submission,* p.295; *Un concours de circonstances*, p.465.

impersonal, second-person pronouns. As a result, the translation resists binary constructions of 'Us and Them', that would see non-American identities appropriated into a conflict that assumes an equal and polarised mode of opposition. As one Bangladeshi character states: '**We** wanted freedom. **They** want to discriminate', in a mirrored sentence that heightens the potential for polarity and conflict between the plural pronouns.[52] Yet the translation moves away from this binary construction, opting for the impersonal and singular 'on': 'On voulait la liberté. Ils veulent discriminer'.[53] By consciously resisting the participatory and communal nature 'nous' in French, the speaker is no longer implicated in a conflict that both resists binary categories of identity, while foregrounding a neutral, plural pronoun in which any character may find truth or resonance. Similarly, from the prejudiced perspective of Sean Gallagher, when the Muslim woman whose headscarf he forcibly removed demands an apology, he finds it significant that she mimics his use of pronominal structures to invoke an image of American unity:

> '"But also, **we** don't make women cover their hair in this country."
> "No, **we** don't make women cover their hair". She put the stress on "**we**". It seemed to amuse her.'[54]

> '"**On** n'exige pas des femmes qu'elle couvrent leurs cheveux dans ce pays."
> — Non, **on** n'exige pas des femmes qu'elles couvrent leurs cheveux (Elle insista sur le '**on**', qui avait semblé amuser).'[55]

Sean bristles at Zahira's attempt to claim some kind of affinity with Sean, staking a claim in belonging to the same 'we' while implicitly refusing to cast the Muslim community as a non-, and anti-, American 'we'. Again, in the translated text, Zahira resists the participatory possibility of a plural pronoun that would consolidate the conflict that Sean's statement seeks to establish.

When viewed as components of a wider, narrative trajectory, the use of second-person pronouns in translation is consistent, and exemplifies how non-American characters resist combative and binary positions of difference. In both of the examples above, the speakers articulate the views of the communities and identities to which they belong, and yet relinquish their participatory roles in favour of a representation of identity that is at once collective yet non-exclusionary. While 'nous' is, by definition, indicative of a single group within a wider population, 'on' has the potential to function

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[52] *The Submission*, p.99.
[53] *Un concours de circonstances,* p.165.
[54] *The Submission*, p.181.
[55] *Un concours de circonstances,* p.293.

as a unanimous and impersonal signifier, that rejects the isolation of individuals, as used by several characters to legitimise their own positions. In short, the translated text stages a similar form of resistance to the non-American characters it portrays, by introducing new forms of differentiation and communality that do not hinge on the hierarchical structures and binary formulations that take centre-stage in the source text.

These translation shifts come full circle, and return to the only literal and equivalent rendering of submission' as 'soumission' in translation. While reading an American newpaper, Asma encounters the following claim:

> 'Islam means **submission** – it makes slaves of its followed, and demands that people of other religions **submit** to it, too.'[56]

> 'L'islam signifie **la soumission** – il transforme ses croyants en esclaves et demande que les personnes d'autre confession **se soumettent** elles aussi.'[57]

If considered literally, this translation shift seems to at odds with the wider resistance the target text stages against exclusionary or combative language in reference to non-American characters, and to Islam as a space that potentially exists beyond the hierarchies of identity and entitlement that define Waldman's post-traumatic city. Yet this observation is not Asma's own: it is presented in a newspaper, in a self-referential nod from the author to the pervasive and conflated modes of representation typical of the post-9/11 age, as mobilised by the participation of the media in nationalistic and public discourses on grief and victimhood.[58] Once again, it is only when adopted into a wider, narrative trajectory that the true subversive force of these translation shifts can be appreciated, particularly in relation to the increasingly divergent binary forms of identity that each text pursues. The identities in the source text are fractured and categorised based on their access to privileged forms of victimhood as polarised, binary categories – an 'Us and Them' – with the traumatic event, made manifest in the memorial, at the centre of the conflict. In contrast, the translated text consistently frames American identity as the centrifugal force for identity in the narrative, and stages a non-American led resistance of nation-centric conceptualisations of space, identity and belonging.

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[56] *The Submission,* p.132.
[57] *Un concours de circonstances,* p.216.
[58] The novel is distinctive in its journalistic and multi-vocal style, and bears the hallmarks of Waldman's experiences as a journalist for the New York Times (and as co-chief of its South Asia bureau). Although this analysis has sought to offer an innovative reading of the text and translation that moves away from conventional readings of the novel as a socio-political commentary, it is interesting to note that the translated text seizes the opportunity to adopt these 'real-world' references into a wider narrative on non-American characters as proponents of exclusionary and restrictive forms of identity.

Conclusion

    While the texts do not explicitly refer to empathy, their engagement with notions of competitive forms of victimhood, inclusion and exclusion, agency and the visual limits of aftermath are all implicated in the empathic mapping of 9/11 texts and their translations. Although Waldman's characters reject and resist empathy, every strategic move towards or away from increasingly centralised and binary concepts of identity hinges on the possibility, and indeed the threat, of reciprocity with another. By displacing empathic structures into the temporal field of aftermath, *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* are surrendered to representations of trauma, and the insidious, pervasive influence of this de-centering on how individuals might consolidate and legitimise their positions in the post-traumatic realm. By reframing empathy as a destructive and divisive form of reciprocity, the texts remap the post-traumatic terrain of aftermath as a network of combative gestures, exclusionary identities and subversive interactions. Proximity is negotiated in relation to the representation and historicization of trauma, where the memorial competition would see visible, tangible and therefore authentic forms of trauma reinstated.

    Writing in 2009, two years before the publication of *The Submission*, Kristiaan Versluys predicted that future works of 9/11 fiction would 'deal with the aftermath', shifting away 'from the perpetrator-victim dichotomy…to a triangulating discourse in which the confrontation with the Other is the central concern'.[59] In many ways, Waldman's novel and its translation stage this confrontation, yet it is against an identity that does not originate from beyond America's borders, but that is fostered in the suspicion and exclusion to which the post-traumatic era gives rise. Through a comparative analysis of the source and target texts, this chapter has recovered the trajectories of this competitive and combative framing of identity, where translation shifts are indicative of the points at which these identities are most susceptible to reciprocity, but also to fracture. While both texts trace the splintering of victimhood and formulation of exclusionary hierarchies of belonging, the translated text is instrumental in resisting the extrapolation of these divisions into binary models of difference.

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[59] Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* (Columbia University Press, 2009), p.183.

Un Concours de Circonstances is a text of alternatives, offering a counterpoint to the exaggerated and restrictive narratives of the source text. Whether by extending the novel's "limits of sight" to problematise concrete conceptualisations of the 'dead' as both temporally and visibly absent from the field or aftermath, or in emphasising Mo's invasive and penetrative potential, the translated text begins to break down the walls erected between every facet of identity and experience in the source text. In empathic terms, while Waldman's characters manipulate and subvert empathic gestures and connections, the translation attempts to form new channels of communication, whereby one empathic position might infiltrate, acknowledge or engage with another in a spirit of productive exchange and reciprocity. In this sense, the resistance in which the 'non-American' characters are engaged in translation is not an alignment of this translated, 'foreign' text with those identities representative of a similar boundary-crossing otherness, but an attempt to challenge and undermine reductive and insular forms of empathy. As such, while *The Submission* may test the limits of empathic maps and subvert their seemingly incessant reciprocity, *Un Concours de Circonstances* reveals how a comparative analysis of text and translation functions as a kind of empathic dialogue that escapes the confines of the fictional realm, and begins to reflect more widely on notions of how interactions, identity and reciprocity are framed in the post-traumatic age.

Axes of Empathy: Locating the 'Terrorist' Worldview in *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*

Marking a definitive shift in empathic focus from the multiplicity and exteriority of DeLillo and Waldman's texts, John Updike's 2006 novel *Terrorist* is firmly anchored in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks as an empathic reality, lived by the individual and detached from the traumatic event. The text tackles the same conflict of incommensurability and difference that has seen binary configurations of Self and Other dominate the reception and understanding of 9/11 fiction, particularly as a genre of translated literature. While other texts in this thesis are more explicitly bound up in the immediacy and geographical specificity of 9/11, *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* escape the confines of Ground Zero, and instead attempt to tap into the psyche of the would-be terrorist, charting the empathic encounters and experiences that might compel a young Muslim-American to consider terrorist violence.

At the heart of this comparative discussion of the texts is an attempt to dispel authenticity, by moving away from the prescriptive, and largely restrictive, expectation that 9/11 novels might serve as exemplary forms of testimony and didactic source texts for translation. By tracing and analysing translation shifts, I hope to illustrate how a comparative analysis of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* as parallel texts contributes to, and mirrors, the potential reciprocity found in the empathic encounters that shape, punctuate, and ultimately derail, the trajectory of the narrative. More specifically, I hope to map these empathic gestures and encounters along a set of axes, with a view to revealing the relationship between the transcendental and the physical as a cipher for empathic proximity and potential. In addition, this chapter seeks to identify shifts in the position of the empathiser across the translation divide: a critical anchor and agent in any empathic encounter that, when adapted in translation, sheds light on how Updike's text engages with the complex matrix of sympathy, identification and empathy.

Set in the decaying, ironically-named town of New Prospect, New Jersey, *Terrorist* follows Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, an 18-year-old American-Muslim, from reserved high school student to radicalised terrorist conspirator. Raised in the shadow of an absent Egyptian father by an American-Irish mother, who seems to Ahmad 'to flaunt her poverty…and the personal freedom so precious to infidel Americans', Ahmad diligently studies the Qur'an with a local imam, Sheikh Rashid, while fervently rejecting

the corruption, vice and sexuality he finds in every facet of American culture.[1] After graduation, and despite his academic ability and the urging of his guidance counsellor, Ahmad complies with Sheikh Rashid's wishes and takes up a job as a delivery driver for a local second-hand furniture store, under the watchful eye of the owner's Muslim son, Charlie Chehab. Thus begins Ahmad's indoctrination, as the faith that has outgrown that of his mentor's at the local mosque sees Ahmad accepting a suicide mission and driving a delivery van of explosives into a tunnel beneath the Hudson River, where it will be detonated in rush-hour traffic. However, despite the novel's title, Ahmad never truly steps into the role of terrorist, as his plot is foiled at the last moment by none other than his high school guidance counsellor, who exposes Charlie Chehab as a CIA informant and erodes Ahmad's resolve to detonate the van. It is at this point that the novel concludes with the same refrain with which it began: '*These devils,* Ahmad thinks*, have taken away my God',* and with it Ahmad's will to carry out his terrorist attack.[2]

Upon its release in 2006, *Terrorist* was subjected to the same criticism that would become indicative of the reception of 9/11 fiction as an unimaginative, inward-looking and inauthentic representation of the traumatic repercussions of the September 11th attacks for the American people. The majority of this criticism found fault in the novel's apparent inauthenticity, in particular Updike's failure to create an authentic and credible voice for his protagonist and would-be perpetrator of terrorist violence: a problematic assertion, given the inherent incompatibility such a perspective assumes of the identities of perpetrator and victim in 9/11 literature. Within the genre of 9/11 fiction, *Terrorist* is unique in its choice of protagonist. While other novels have adopted the narrative gaze of the terrorist, such characters tend to be painted in broad strokes and somehow contained within their narrative role as terrorist aggressors. In *Falling Man*, both Hammad and Ernst Hechinger are marginalised, and defined, by their foreignness, and therefore placed beyond the limits of the novel's understanding, or, more specifically, its desire for understanding. Other novels evade such criticism on the grounds of authenticity by fictionalising the lives of real terrorist insurgents, as in Jarett Kobek's *ATTA*. Lastly, several novels have attempted to expose the psyche of the 'Other' and yet, in resisting the convenient binary of Self and Other, favour 'moderate', Westernized characters (as in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Submission)*, contrary to the devout Muslim

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[1] John Updike, *Terrorist* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 141. All subsequent references will refer to this edition.
[2] *Terrorist,* p.310.

protagonist of Updike's foray into the 9/11 novel. Crucially, Ahmad's genesis and trajectory towards terrorist violence is not founded in the deserts of an al-Qaida training camp, but in the consumerism, vice and suburban corruption of the Middle America of Updike's earlier novels. It therefore becomes incredibly difficult to paint Ahmad as a convenient terrorist Other, as other 9/11 novels have done: his radicalisation is the product of a fierce internal religiosity that is eventually exploited and perpetuated by exterior forces operating within the sphere of American culture. *Terrorist,* at least before its translation, is firmly on home turf.

That Updike should face such criticism for his protagonist's apparent inauthenticity, despite the fact that Ahmad's experience is firmly grounded in American culture, is perhaps indicative of the prescriptive nature of much critical literature published in response to 9/11 novels, as well as the hostility and scepticism that has come to typify critical writing on the genre. The most simplistic of this criticism finds Updike guilty of the same 'failure of imagination' found by some in Don DeLillo's 9/11 fiction: a failing attributed to their status as white, male, realist, established novelists, both over the age of 60 at the time of the attacks.[3] The source of this inauthenticity can be found in the superficial inconsistencies in the narrative voice – as this chapter will discuss at length – as indications of an unrealistic portrait of a would-be terrorist: a protagonist that is incompatible with Updike's writing style, a character 'too attuned to the world, too Updikean. He may have his finger on the red button of destruction…but he seems as likely to admire the way the sunlight catches its surface, as to actually press it.'[4] In a similarly prescriptive vein, Ahmad has been cast by some critics as 'a completely unbelievable individual: more robot than human being…a static, one-dimensional stereotype', while Richard Gray, in one of the most influential overviews of the 9/11 literary aesthetic, finds Updike's protagonist 'artificial, even stereotypical.'[5] Indeed, although more forgiving responses to the novel have attempted to account for this inauthenticity as a mindful refusal to imagine and render the terrorist Other effectively,

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[3] Samuel Thomas, 'Outtakes and Outrage: The Means and Ends of Suicide Terror', *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies,* 57.3 (2011), 425-449 <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/450769> (p.439).
[4] Tim Adams, 'Portrait of the terrorist as a young aesthete', *Observer,* 23 July 2006.
[5] Michiko Kakutani, 'John Updike's 'Terrorist' Imagines a Homegrown Threat to Homeland Security', *NY Times,* 6 June 2006; Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Gray, *American Literary History*, 21.1 (2009), 152-158.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_literary_history/v021/21.1.rothberg.pdf> (p.153); Richard Gray, *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), p.80.

this reading of 'how the text undermines itself' still fails to get away from reading *Terrorist* as yet another literary failure of imagination.[6]

Just as critical discourses on the novel have employed the language of empathy and emotional identification, so too have Updike's own reflections on his work, and on his motivations for foregrounding the perspective of a would-be terrorist, emphasised the potential for empathic identification and sympathy in *Terrorist*. In publicity interviews for the novel, Updike consistently interpreted his role as that of empathic mediator, where 'the fiction writer has the opportunity to make sympathetic a variety of viewpoints and in the case of this novel to explore the mentality of one terrorist, one idealistic and somewhat confused young man who is led into a plot.'[7] This need to inspire sympathy seems, at least from Updike's public commentary on the novel, to drive the novel's intended reception. Elsewhere, Updike described his desire to create a novel that 'expands our sympathies…I was hoping to present a terrorist who attracts our sympathy, and, in his way, is likeable', claiming that '[one] can't ask for a more sympathetic and, in a way, more loving portrait of a terrorist.'[8] As with any public response to a novel from its creator in media interviews, these comments create a superficial and easily digestible discourse on the novel, but it is noteworthy that both critical responses to the novel, and the novelist's own comments, articulate notions of sympathy and empathy, as well as the degree of authenticity required to instigate a genuine experience of either emotional state. Whether the reader sympathises with the novel's 'likeable', radicalised protagonist is outside the interests of this comparative analysis, as are the motivations or intentions of the novelist and translator in sympathetically portraying the radicalisation of the protagonist. What is relevant, is that the potential for empathic gestures in the novel – what have been defined elsewhere as an 'admiration of [the terrorist's] radical act, or radical act, or identification with their imagined motives, to applauding opposition to the world's only superpower'– might be heightened by the inherent duality in the translation of such a perspective.[9]

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[6] Samuel Thomas, 'Outtakes and Outrage', p.444.
[7] KCRW Radio, *John Updike on Bookworm* [podcast] September 14 2006, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i484NzOX3Wc>.
[8] Louise Witt and John Updike interview, 'Why Updike delved into suicide killers' psyches', *Today Books*, 18 July 2006; Charles McGrath, 'An Interview with John Updike: In Terrorist, a Cautious Novelist Takes On a New Fear', *NY Times*, 31 May 2006.
[9] Anna Hartnell, 'Violence and the Faithful in Post-9/11 America: Updike's *Terrorist*, Islam, and the Specter of Exceptionalism', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 57:3 (2011) 468-502, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/450771> [accessed 12 March 2016] (pp.482-3).

It has been argued that Updike's novel seeks to 'provide a cohesive psychological portrait of the would-be suicide bomber…constructed according to a logic of empathetic identification' and the attempt to discern a cumulative pattern of translation shifts certainly fits with this search for cohesion in the depiction of the terrorist.[10] Similarly, both text and translation, despite their divergent trajectories, share a common resolution, suggesting that this cohesion is maintained, to some extent, across the translation divide, and that both narratives must converge on this point. What is unclear in this reading of the novel is how far this empathetic identification resides with Updike, or with Ahmad, within the world of the text. For it is empathy, and the authenticity of the empathetic identification intrinsic to novelistic writing, and particularly to writing about terrorism, that has proved the greatest limiting factor in critical readings of *Terrorist* and therefore, by extension, of its French translation. In criticism that imitates much of that articulated in the wake of DeLillo's *Falling Man*, 'the empathy [*Terrorist*] proffers, it is implicitly suggested by Updike's critics, becomes an empty gesture in the hands of a white Presbyterian bourgeois aesthete', in a critical narrative that assumes Updike is inherently incapable of rendering an authentic portrait of the terrorist Other as a result of purely autobiographical attributes.[11] This analysis and reciprocal reading of 9/11 novels and their translations has consistently refused a reception-centric reading of the texts, and has sought to distance both text and translation from the influence of the various agents and external pressures. Yet significantly, this view of *Terrorist* as a failure of authenticity, and as a fundamentally flawed empathic gesture, hinges on the status of Ahmad as the Other: an identity that, I would argue, is not present in the literary text itself. In other words, the process of othering the protagonist originates in textual reception, rather than literary creation and translation.

While these critical perspectives are grounded in the novel's reception – an interpretive field not considered in this comparative analysis of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* – many of the stylistic aspects on which a parallel reading of text and translation sheds most light have been, in the original text, interpreted as markers of the novel's inability to secure a convincing and authentic terrorist narrative. By foregrounding a comparative reading of text and translation, this analysis of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* seeks to dispel authenticity and the privileged status of literary origins in translation and comparative

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[10] Thomas, 'Outtakes and Outrage', p.438.
[11] Ibid., p.439.

discourses. Reframing the translated novel as a critical reading of the original novel, and exposing the translation shifts secured in the translation process, not only uncovers the interpretive gestures and potential for empathy in the English text, but also prioritises comparative, rather than derivative, literary analysis. In short, the translated text destabilises the very grounds for authenticity on which much of the novel's criticism in founded, by bracketing the capital of the original literary work in favour of a comparative and reciprocal reading of source and target texts as equivalent literary works.

This chapter does not aim to respond to, or indeed refute, the critical reception of Updike's novel. However, it is telling that the basis of the critical literature is, for the most part, grounded in the novel's apparent lack of authenticity and the unconvincing rendering of Ahmad as emotionless, terrorist droid: qualities that, in translation, are revealed to be markers of a wider shift and engagement with the problematic matrix of sympathy, identification and empathy with which 9/11 fiction consistently, and deliberately, grapples. In a rare example of measured praise for *Terrorist*, Kristiaan Versluys observes that:

> [F]or all of its obvious flaws, the novel gains depth and narrative momentum from the fact that Ahmad's explicit religious instruction and his progress on the way to self-sacrifice is paralleled by his gradual discovery of a transcendence that is inherent in the meanest of objects – a transcendence that vouchsafes creation rather than destruction.[12]

Versluys casts the novel as a journey of self-discovery, whereby Ahmad comes to privilege life over destruction, despite the fatalistic trajectory of the novel towards terrorist violence, while suggesting a kind of self-awareness and gesture towards optimism or hope. However, in light of a comparative analysis of text and translation, I believe neither of these readings is possible. References to transcendence are present in Ahmad's perspective from the very beginning of the novel, particularly in relation to his relationship with the physical embodiment of the everyday and, by extension, the culture he is determined to reject in the most violent of ways. Instead, I would argue that the empathic encounters that punctuate and adjust Ahmad's world-view do not occur as a linear progression towards some form of discovery or closure at the novels' conclusions, but instead might be mapped onto a vertical axis of transcendental proximity, along which these encounters, as well as the identities and perspectives they involve, are expressed in

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[12] Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p.174.

strictly physical terms of proximity and distance. In this sense, the narratives of both text and translation not only seek to reframe the conventional binary relationship of Self and Other as a conflict between the realms of the physical and metaphysical, but also locate identities in a top-down structure, starting with the transcendental, immutable positioning of Ahmad's God. Crucially though, this structure is not fixed across the original text and its French translation, and it is therefore possible to read translation shifts as a recasting of the proximity that defines the relationship between the transcendental and the material, and of the empathic encounters for which this configuration stands in as cipher.

Defining empathy

Empathy, sympathy and identification have dominated critical discourses on 9/11 fiction, with *Terrorist*, as one might expect from a novel that inhabits and interrogates the psyche of a would-be terrorist, as no exception. Updike himself has waded into debates surrounding the novel's inherent claims at authenticity, as well as his potential complicity in depicting the perspective of a potential terrorist Other, albeit via literary means. Although this analysis has sought to distance the agency of novelists and translators from a discussion of the literary potential of fictional works, the proclivity for Updike to quote his work's ability to sympathise with the terrorist perpetrator is particularly relevant considering the empathic focus of this thesis. However, the term 'empathy' is suspiciously absent from accounts of Updike's novelistic intentions; although this is hardly surprising, given the difficult debates with which Updike was already publically engaged on the nature of terrorism and representing the terrorist Other in the heightened post-9/11, Iraq War era.

Any attempt to distinguish between sympathy and empathy, even in simple terms, is derived from complex, theoretical discussions that seek to carve out clear boundaries between the affective states of the two conditions. For De Vignemont and Jacob, empathy requires that 'an empathizer and [their] target both experience an affective state', that is, the *same* affective state: to experience anything else is to feel sympathy for the target.[13] This configuration is certainly true of Updike vis-à-vis the text, and indeed of the readers, both of whom are safely ensconced behind the veil of the novel as fictional work, and again it bears repeating that this analysis is not interested in measuring the reception and

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[13] Dan Zahavi and John Michael, 'Beyond Mirroring: 4E Perspectives on Empathy', forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of 4e Cognition*, ed. by A. Newen, L. de Bruin, and S. Gallagher (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.5.

interpretation of the text and translation through such receptive agents for this very reason.

Given the reciprocity of empathy as a movement between two positions, the position of the empathiser is, arguably, as crucial as that of the empathic subject, and the possibility of a fixed position for the empathiser comes under scrutiny in the case of translation and comparative readings of translated and original works. Other chapters in this thesis have discussed the significance of space and the temporal moment as the fixed points around which source and target texts, and the empathic encounters in each, might be mapped. Yet an empathic reading of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* hinges on the relative position of the empathiser in both texts, and it is necessary to ask how far Ahmad's empathic alignment – heavily influenced by his complex position as empathiser and narrative focaliser – might shift across the texts. Consequently, if Ahmad's position as empathiser shifts, so too do the relative positions of other identities and empathic positions throughout the narrative, and theoretically, it should become possible to trace these shifts in translation to begin to map, if only partially, the empathic encounters and positioning of those other to Ahmad across the texts.

It is at this stage that the role of 'Ahmad as terrorist' becomes all the more pertinent. Ahmad is consistently labelled as 'terrorist' in critical discussions of the novel, as well as by the novelist himself: indeed, the title of the novel, in both English and French, could not be clearer in the status attributed to the protagonist. Yet crucially, Ahmad never commits the terrorist act to which the novel inexorably leads, begging the question of whether terrorism is the act of committing violence or, as in Ahmad's case, whether it is the misguided and unrealised desire to incite terror. Defining terrorism is beyond the scope of this work and unnecessary for this comparative analysis. What is compelling, however, is how far Ahmad's status as terrorist, with the connotations of otherness that such an identity implies, is useful for understanding how his role as empathiser functions in translation. To return to questions of the protagonist's authenticity once more, upholding Ahmad's status as terrorist in this discussion and in translation, risks falling back on the conventional Self/Other and victim/perpetrator dichotomies that, as has been discussed elsewhere, are all the more likely to be consolidated in discussions of source and target texts, and of the translation process.

For the purposes of this analysis, it is necessary to interrogate the shifts in Ahmad's conceptualisation of the self/other boundary as performed through empathic identification and empathy-proper, in order to trace his own trajectory in both texts. Moreover, this discussion will consider how shifts in Ahmad's empathic position might shape the wider empathic terrain of the texts, and trace the impact of such shifts on the relative positions and configurations of other identities with whom the would-be perpetrator comes into contact.

In *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*, empathy is the key to unlocking and understanding the connections and relationships that Ahmad unwittingly forges as he is drawn ever closer to the possibility of terrorist violence. If 'empathy requires a prior understanding the other's mental life in order to get off the ground, and is then supposed to allow for an enhanced understanding of the other's feeling', then it is empathy that Ahmad actively resists, seeking difference and distance as he navigates the world via proximal and transcendental means.[14] Interpreting Ahmad's self-isolation as an empathic impulse is further illustrated by the nature of empathy as an 'other-centered' state, 'insofar as it involves a concern for the other person's affective state', and it is the process of unsettlement from source to target that this comparative text-translation analysis itself seeks to mimic.[15] It is with this de-centering of the source – of both source text and empathiser – that we come full circle, and return to how a translation-oriented analysis might move beyond authenticity-centric discourses on the novel. To borrow the binary terminology of the sources above momentarily, this comparative analysis is fundamentally 'other-centred': *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* are only compatible as reciprocal texts because, across the translation divide, each is affectively invested in the other as its empathic counterpart.

This affective investment is best understood as the multitude of empathic encounters in which Ahmad is implicated and yet, both within and across the two texts in question, neither his position as empathiser, nor the nature of his empathic endeavours, are fixed. This analysis will not only trace the different facets of empathy – contagion, pity, sympathy and empathic identification proper – that the novel and its translation chart, but also seeks to map the empathic encounters in which Ahmad is implicated along the axes of transcendental proximity, and of closeness and familiarity. By mapping the translation shifts in the privileged position of the empathiser-protagonist and the relative

[14] Ibid., p.5.
[15] Ibid., p.5

location of others, this chapter hopes to determine how far the relationship between the transcendental and the material might stand in for a more complex matrix of empathy and identification. It is this very relationship, as well as the superficial, binary form it takes in the original text, that has drawn criticism from literary scholars claiming inauthenticity and narrative inconsistency. However, by foregrounding a comparative analysis of text and translation, I will argue that these inconsistencies conceal a more nuanced series of empathic encounters that are instrumental in locating and negotiating the physical, ideological and empathetic position of the would-be terrorist as his perceived 'others' in Updike's snapshot of post-9/11 America.

Locating the novel's 'low creatures' in translation

The translation of the novel's 'low creatures' is instrumental in not only exposing the vertical axis of transcendental distance and proximity against which Ahmad measures his encounters with others, but also in introducing the exceptionalism to which he assigns his own position and religiosity. At several points in the narrative, 'low creatures', such as worms, cockroaches and beetles, are described alongside references to the metaphysical, in stark contrast to Ahmad's unforgiving treatment of the human 'devils/démons' that populate his everyday life.[16] The result is a concentration of those transcendental signifiers that refer to overarching religious narratives within the linguistic subtext of Ahmad's narration, as well as linguistic markers that, when read in context, extend and diversify this semantic field.

> he has noticed a sign, a spiral traced on the pavement in luminous ichor, angelic slime from the body **of some low creature**, a worm or snail of which only this trace remains...But no little worm-body was left at the spiral's center. So where did that body fly to? **Perhaps it was snatched up** by God and taken straight to Heaven.[17]

> Il a remarqué un signe, une spirale d'ichor scintillant sur le trottoir, l'angélique substance gluante **de quelque créature** inférieure - ver ou limace - dont il ne reste que cela...Pourtant, nul petit corps de vermisseau au centre du spirale...**Peut-être avait-il été emporté** par Dieu, directement au Paradis?[18]

Such instances of narrative interjection have been considered indicative of the inconsistencies that, for many critics, reveal Ahmad as an unlikely, inauthentic, overly

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[16] *Terrorist*, p.3. John Updike, *Terroriste,* trans. by Michèle Hechter (Paris: Seuil, 2008), p.9. All subsequent references will refer to this translated edition.
[17] *Terrorist,* p.5
[18] *Terroriste,* p.11

'Updikean' terrorist. Indeed this excerpt offers an insight into the various subtextual themes and tensions at work beneath the surface of Updike's novel and the text's translation. Both excerpts are firmly grounded in the realm of the visible, where the signs of a higher or greater power are made tangible, in line with the physicality through which American culture demands Ahmad experiences the world. It is necessary to make this qualification between higher and greater as, in the original text, the worm is a 'low creature' in the vertical hierarchy of creatures, man and God, while in translation, it is rendered as somehow inferior ('inférieure') to both Ahmad and his God. Similarly, the worm's body is 'snatched *up*', creating the sense of a positon of relative vertical distance, while in the French text, this possible hierarchy is avoided with the verb 'emporté' (taken away, carried off).

What is most revealing in these excerpts is the diverse nature of the references to the transcendental or religious, which references 'ichor' – a blood-like fluid said to run in the veins of the Greek gods – and 'angelic' imagery, as well as God and Heaven. In translation, 'Heaven' is rendered as the equivalent 'Paradis', but in the context of a novel that deals primarily in Islamic beliefs and practices, the interchangeability of this word is notable, and becomes all the more significant as this section of text is directly followed by consistent references to Islamic faith: 'Allah, God, He, the Living, the Self-Subsistent, Mohammad, Paradise, Prophet', or in French, 'Allah, Dieu, le Vivant, celui qui se suffit à lui-même, Mahmet, Paradis, Prophète.'[19] Therefore, the greater contrast, or what has been interpreted elsewhere as an inconsistency, seems to lie in the English text, where these non-Islamic references give way, somewhat suddenly, to religion-specific references. On the surface, descriptions of the metaphysical proof found in the trail of a now-shrivelled worm feel quite jarring, and seemingly indicate a narrative struggle that seeks to negotiate the physicality of the American culture that bombards Ahmad while articulating the ideological and value-driven perspective of the would-be terrorist. However, the tension in these excerpts not only signals a tension between the banality of the American everyday and the transcendence instilled in Ahmad's world-view by the metaphorical discourse of his religious mentor, but also alludes to what will become as a consistent attempt to render the distance between organic creatures (with human beings excluded from this category), Ahmad and his God.

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[19] *Terrorist,* pp.4-5; *Terroriste*, pp.10-11.

Elsewhere, various descriptions of animals in the text emphasise a gap that, though primarily physical, alludes to the metaphysical distance between organic creatures, Ahmad, and God:

> 'He looks down from his new height and thinks that to the insects **unseen** in the grass **he would be**, if they had a consciousness like his, **God**.'[20]

> 'Il regarde par terre, de sa toute nouvelle hauteur, et pense que les **invisibles** insectes, dans l'herbe, **verraient en lui un dieu**, s'ils étaient pourvues d'une conscience semblable à la sienne.'[21]

While the physical distance between the insects and Ahmad is maintained and transposed in translation, the conviction of Ahmad's observation is not. Significantly, the French text introduces an indefinite article to qualify Ahmad's claim that he would be considered as a god, not *the God*. As such, the proper noun is no longer capitalised in translation and is therefore no longer placed at the apex of the vertical access of transcendence to which the English text strictly adheres in this excerpt. Accordingly, the word 'dieu' shifts into the middle of the sentence, while in the English text, the location of the subordinate clause, and the emphasis this attributes to the final word in the sentence, highlights the exceptionalism Ahmad attributes to the capitalised term and his perceived proximity to such a position. In addition, the French text extends the semantic field of perception constructed in the first part of the phrase: the verb 'look down' ('regarde') and the 'unseen' insects, 'invisible' in the translation, are joined by the conditional iteration of the verb 'to see' (verraient). Just as Ahmad's certainty is rendered less definite in translation, the emphasis placed on perception and visibility mitigates what, in the original text, is a potentially blasphemous observation from the young Muslim on his godlike superiority.

The positioning of low creatures in both texts further consolidates the vertical construction of proximity through which Ahmad articulates his faith, and the relative, hierarchical position in which he places others and imposes upon their own ability to perceive the world. In short, Ahmad's view of God is as a higher being from which the proximity or distance of all other creatures is determined.

> 'Ahmad did, in truth, pity them, being fascinated by the vast insect population teeming at the feet of godlike men...But it was not Ahmad's role to argue; it was

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[20] *Terrorist,* pp.4-5.
[21] *Terroriste,* p.10.

his to learn, **to submit to this own place in Islam's vast structure, visible and invisible.**'[22]

'Oui, Ahmad les plaignait, fasciné par la vaste population d'insectes grouillant aux pieds des hommes divinement grands...Mais Ahmad n'était pas là pour discuter, il était là pour apprendre, **pour rester à sa place, dans la vaste structure visible and invisible de l'Islam.**'[23]

At moments such as these, the vertical framework for conceptualising distance – whether physical or metaphysical – as well as the extent to which this is determined by perception, is made explicit in the original text. The strict sense of vertical distance between God and Man in the source text is diffused somewhat in translation: Ahmad does not submit to Islam, but remains in his place ('rester à sa place') within the boundaries and frames of understanding it provides. Yet, as in other depictions of these creatures, this vertical framing of proximity and distance is always mitigated by perception: those visible and invisible structures to which Ahmad, and all that he encounters, must conform.

The translated text is one of mitigation, dampening the vertical distance created between organic creatures, Ahmad and his God. This moderation is secured either through an emphasis on perception and the visible, or by reducing the sense of certainty in Ahmad's narrative. In another example of the tensions in the novel's 'Updikean' narrator, Ahmad observes in the loading bay of Excellency Furnishings, that:

'[T]his space will always have something magic about it, something peaceful not of this world, **a strange quality of being under magnification from some high vantage**. It is a place God has breathed upon.'

'[L]'endroit aura toujours pour Ahmad quelque chose de magique, une essence surnaturellement calme, étrangement pure. Un lieu sur lequel a soufflé Dieu.'

This extract marks a significant omission from the narrative set forth in the source text, and signals not only a shift in the transcendental markers of Ahmad's perspective, but also suggests a deviation from the conceptualisation of space and proximity in translation. Contrary to previous examples, the sentence is reconstructed in translation, adopting a non-standard sentence structure that relocates the reference to God – Dieu - into an emphatic position as the final word. Ahmad is not attempting to draw a comparison between himself and God at this stage; on the contrary, this extract captures Ahmad's certainty that the banality of the loading bay is evidence of God's transcendental position and power over the material realm. By foregrounding the position of God, both sentences

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[22] *Terrorist,* pp.76-7.
[23] *Terroriste*, pp.84-5.

culminate in a reference to the apex of the vertical axis of proximity and transcendence, yet to different effects: the first, emphasising the possibility for comparison in the English text, while the second highlights the tendency of the translation to adhere to strictly vertical conceptualisations of space and faith. In addition, by omitting the phrase highlighted above, the translated text lacks the explicit spatial positioning that consolidates Ahmad's primarily vertical framing of distance and proximity in reference to the transcendent. Yet again, the translated text mitigates this distance, rendering Ahmad less didactic in his discourse on faith and religiosity. In contrast, Ahmad consistently equates vertical height with superiority and power in the original text: a sense of surety from which the apparent inconsistencies in the narrative voice might be traced.

However, the omission of references to a vertical conceptualisation of proximity and distance in translation introduces the possibility for an evolution in the tone of the narrative voice. Where in the original text, Ahmad's reflections are steadfast in their surety, the translated text creates a greater sense of trajectory and crescendo, as the young narrator is increasingly indoctrinated and edges towards fundamentalist violence:

> The legs of the small creature wiggle and write in a kind of fury, then subside into a semblance of thought, as if the beetle seeks to reason a way out of its predicament… Ahmad rises from his seat on the course plank step and stands over the insect in lordly fashion, feeling huge. Yet he shies away from touching this mysterious fallen bit of life...The experience, so strangely magnified, has been, **Ahmad feels certain**, supernatural.[24]

> Elles remuent, se contorsionnent en une sorte de furie, puis se calment, eu un semblant de pensée, comme si l'infime créature cherchait un moyen raisonnable de se tirer de cette situation fâcheuse...Ahmad quitte la marche en planche grossière sur laquelle il était assis et surplombe l'insecte de toute sa hauteur majestueuse. Il se sent immense, pourtant il craint de toucher ce bout de vie mystérieusement déchu…Cette expérience d'une si étrange intensité, **Ahmad en est certain**, était surnaturelle.[25]

In light of the previous translation shifts in Ahmad's perspective of seemingly insignificant organic creatures, these extracts – though examples of translation equivalence – are useful in providing an insight into the trajectory of the narrative voice towards its potentially violent demise. At this late stage in the novel, Ahmad is certain that the death of the beetle he witnesses is somehow supernatural: no longer a visible sign or perception of God's power, but evidence of a higher power. In the original text, this

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[24] *Terrorist,* pp.252-4.
[25] *Terroriste*, pp.261-3.

description does not feel so revelatory, and instead serves as a confirmation of the religious point of view that has been maintained and consolidated throughout the novel: a perspective that develops and intensifies in the French text.

A case for pity as empathic endeavour

Although Ahmad confesses to feeling pity for low creatures, the fact that their positions are framed relative to his own, as well as his proximity to (or distance from) the transcendental, suggests a more complex identification than mere sympathy would entail. In *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*, the following distinction between sympathy and empathy is particularly useful:

> Sympathy, one might say, gives purchase on identity to achieve compassionate communion. Empathy, meanwhile, is a form of vicarious insight into the other that insists on one's own identity. Empathy involves, therefore, a double movement of the imagination: a stepping into and a stepping back from the perspective of the other, at once an identification with an other and a determined insistence on the other's alterity.[26]

In this sense, empathy not only involves the adoption of another perspective through imaginative means, but equally affirms the alterity of the other's perspective as a temporary state of empathic identification that cannot be maintained or usurped entirely. I find this definition particularly useful as Ahmad's empathetic gaze does not adhere to the conventional altruism of empathic 'perspective-taking', in that imagining the perspectives of these low creatures ultimately allows Ahmad to conceptualise and consolidate his own position, relative to those organic creatures around him and to 'Islam's vast structure'.[27] It is possible that this form of perspective-taking might serve selfish aims, and it has been argued elsewhere that many 'empathic identifications with others do not have as their goal mutual understanding, altruism, consolation, intersubjective compassion, care, or social cohesion—goals conventionally regarded as the sine qua non of empathy. Instead, the empathic faculty is used for deceptive and ultimately violent purposes.'[28] This form of 'tactical empathy' sees an 'other' conveniently constructed as such in order for their position to be manipulated or selectively inhabited by the empathiser. As a result, either the empathiser is somehow validated, or the relative positions of the 'self' and 'other' in

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[26] Nils Bubandt and Rane Willerslev, 'The Dark Side of Empathy: Mimesis, Deception, and the Magic of Alterity', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57.1, (2015), 5-34 (p.7).
[27] F.B. de Waal, 'Putting the altruism back into altruism: the evolution of empathy', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59 (2008) 279-300 (p.283); *Terrorist,* p.77.
[28] Nils Bubandt and Rane Willerslev, 'The Dark Side of Empathy'*,* p.6.

question are consolidated via the experience.[29] This version of empathic identification will become particularly relevant considering how Ahmad frames his relationship with the unbelievers of the text, as will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter. Nevertheless, I would argue that the portrayal of low creatures in the English text is not one of compassion or intersubjectivity, but one of strict vertical divisions that Ahmad must maintain if the certainty of his religious perspective is to succeed. In translation, the severity of this vertical distance is mitigated, and, in terms of empathy, the voice of the protagonist in the text's opening and middle sections is arguably more attuned to conventional conceptualisations of empathy as a 'the capacity to take another's perspective' without projecting one's own relative position on the exchange.'[30]

Pity does creep into the narrative, in rare moments of compassion for non-believers. Although definitions of empathy are clear on the distinctions between the simplistic emotional state of pity and the complex reciprocity of empathy, I would argue that, in Ahmad's case, such instances might be interpreted as empathic encounters, however crude. In the English text, Ahmad and his terrorist mentor look over the Manhattan skyline, and as the latter praises the absence of the 'ugly towers' that 'didn't belong', Ahmad admits that:

> '"**I pitied them.** Especially those that jumped. How terrible, to be so trapped by crushing heat that jumping to certain death is better. Think of the dizziness, looking down before you jump."'[31]

Ahmad has already been lectured by his radical imam on the dangers and futility of pitying non-believers, and here admits that he 'pitied' the victims of the attacks on the twin towers, his present perspective protected by his use of the past tense. However, in translation, Ahmad's pity is current – '**Je les plains**. Surtout ceux qui ont sauté' – creating what is perhaps the novel's most concrete link to the 9/11 attacks, as well as the possibility that the protagonist's superiority is not impervious to feeling pity or sympathy for those below him, and therefore below his God's notice or reach.[32] Alone, this excerpt may be read as a narrative inconsistency, an inability for the narrative voice to remain steadfast in its cruelty and singular world-view in translation. However, when considered in light of the empathic trajectory the translated text seems to pursue, it could equally be

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[29] Ibid., p.6.
[30] F. B. de Waal, 'Putting the altruism back into altruism', p.285.
[31] *Terrorist,* p.186.
[32] *Terroriste,* p.197.

argued that the translation extrapolates the content of the original text to problematise, or indeed humanise, the protagonist as a character capable of empathy, however basic.

Empathy and otherness

For Ahmad, the construction of otherness relies heavily on the relative distance and proximity of empathic positions in the text, and it is the extent of this space – that is both ideological and topographical in nature – that determines the potential 'violent intent' in the practice of empathy, as understood by Bubandt and Willerslev.[33] While the language of violence has found itself aligned with the process of translation via several contemporary translation scholars, I find that these studies tend to fall back on binary conceptualisations of source and target texts; emphasising difference and potential conflict in such a way that a hierarchy across the translation divide is almost always constructed. Instead, I want to ask how positioning *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* as parallel and reciprocal texts might itself mitigate a reading of their intertextual relationship as one of derivation and difference, and offer an insight into the aggression and possession that frames many of the empathic encounters in Updike's novel.

The texts themselves engage in the duality and reciprocity that has come to define contemporary definitions of empathy, as a 'double movement of the imagination' and a 'dual structure…which forms a simultaneous gesture of proximity and distance'.[34] By foregrounding the perspective of the would-be terrorist, Updike's narrative engages in a dialogue on the potential interchangeability of narrative positions that are conventionally divided by assumptions surrounding alterity and incommensurability. Ahmad is not simply the terrorist Other, but the protagonist through which the narrative is focalised: he occupies the privileged position reserved for the Self, while oscillating between positions of otherness, whether his own, or that of those low creatures and unbelievers around him. In this sense, Ahmad plays a dual role and his narrative position remains unfixed (both within the world of the text and, less importantly, beyond): a lack of stability that the translated text is particularly well-positioned to explore. Ahmad's potential for narrative duplicity, itself a product of engaging in empathic perspective-taking, is extended in translation, and by the comparative analysis that this thesis conducts, as a means of

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[33] Nils Bubandt and Rane Willerslev, 'The Dark Side of Empathy', p.6.
[34] Lewis Ward, 'A Simultaneous Gesture of Proximity and Distance: W.G. Sebald's Empathic Narrative Persona', *Journal of Modern Literature,* 36.1 (2012), 1-16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jmodelite.36.1.1>, (p.3).

creating a dual text with which the original novel might form a discursive and comparative relationship.

The translated text is instrumental in exposing the potential nuances in how Updike's text constructs and negotiates empathic positions as a potential threat to the autonomy of the empathiser. For Ahmad, empathic identification is not only a means of understanding another, but a means of acknowledging the apparent instability of his own position. The opening line of the novel immediately exposes Ahmad's besieged mentality with the pseudo-epigraph that will also mark the novel's close:

'Devils, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek **to take away my God**.'[35]

Such 'devils' are swiftly revealed to be everywhere, as the agents of America's perceived godlessness, commodification, vice and overt sexuality. Ahmad is indiscriminate in who these 'devils' or 'démons' might be, whether the diverse ethnic groups represented in the corridors of his high school, his teachers, community members and even his own mother. Their threat is not a consequence of their ethnic origins or religious beliefs, but their pressing proximity. The accusatory and deictic use of 'these' in the opening sentence gesture is instrumental in immediately locating Ahmad in close quarters with the 'infidels' of his daily existence, and emphasises the very real possibility, at least from Ahmad's perspective, that these 'weak Christians and non-observant Jews' represent a legitimate intent, not to erode or corrupt Ahmad's faith, but to remove his God.[36]

In translation, the nature of this perceived intent becomes clearer, both through the explicitation of the process of taking away Ahmad's God, while implicating Ahmad as the object and potential victim of these efforts:

'Des démons! pense Ahmad. Des démons qui veulent **m'éloigner de mon Dieu**.'[37]

The verb 'éloigner' is instrumental in securing a translation shift that at once communicates what will become a growing sense of alienation for Ahmad, as well as a distinctive shift in tone in his ability to articulate and express what he perceived to be the realities of his faith. A closer look at the lexicographical components of the verb 'éloigner' in French, reveals a separation between Ahmad and his God that is at once

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[35] *Terrorist*, p.3.
[36] *Terrorist,* p.3.
[37] *Terroriste*, p.9.

more totalising, and yet seemingly less permanent, than the removal of the latter by the 'devils' of the English text.

Two interpretations of the verb are particularly useful; the first in defining the nature of the distance created between Ahmad and his God, while the second, pronominal iteration of the verb captures the progressive nature of creating such a distance. 'Éloigner', translated roughly as 'to take/push/drive away' can refer to the creation of a distance that is not merely physical, but also potentially psychological, moral or intellectual in nature. Although this interpretation of the verb 'to take away' may be present in the subtext of the original text – and the reader may discern this implicit meaning, although it is incredibly difficult to theorise or analyse how this subjective interpretation may take place – it is made explicit in the translation as a process of separation, diversion (détourner) or the creation of a gap (écarter). In addition, 'éloigner' tends to refer to a process, or to the trajectory of a person away from a space or object. These etymological iterations of the verb as a diversion or detour are particularly significant given Ahmad's frequent references to his faith as the 'Straight Path' or, in French, 'la Voie', in a translation shift that sees the French text begin to create a cohesive link between the mentality of the terrorist-protagonist and the language of fundamentalism.[38]

The pronominal use of 's'éloigner' in the French text is particularly significant as a linguistic marker of Ahmad's world view. The French translation inserts and directly implicates Ahmad in the action being described and framed, from the very onset of the novel, that this is a heavily-perspectival narrative. As this is Ahmad's voice, the opening line of the translation firmly places the narrator into the position of victim (or object) of the actions of exterior forces and beings, securing a significant shift in both meaning and proximity. Equally, the insertion of the pronoun 'me' shifts the sense of permanence in the phrase: in English, Ahmad occupies a fixed position, and *his* God is somehow taken away. Moreover, the loss of the deictic 'these' in French erases the proximal gesture secured in the English text, again shifting emphasis onto Ahmad as the key subject and object of the sentence. Whether this reading of the opening line transforms God, revered through the prolific use of transcendental signifiers elsewhere in the text, into an object capable of being removed, is open to debate. However, what I think is evident in this

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[38] *Terrorist,* p.3; *Terroriste*, p.9.

translation shift is that, in French, it is Ahmad's God that is permanent, fixed, immovable; the corruption and materialism of American culture does not seek to remove all traces of an Islamic God from Ahmad's world, but instead seeks to distance Ahmad from his faith.

At the height of Ahmad's splintering of the world into clear, vertically-divided categories, as he drives the furniture van laden with explosives towards its destination, the sense of vertical distance and hierarchy that permeates his narrative is extended to allude to a sense of status. However, this division is negotiated in religious and ethnic, rather than socioeconomic, terms, and speaks to Ahmad's increasing certainty of his exceptionalism:

> To these co-religionists, Islam is less a faith, **a filigreed doorway** into the supernatural, than a habit, a facet of **their condition as an underclass, alien** in a nation that persists in thinking of itself as light-skinned, English-speaking, and Christian. To Ahmad **these blocks feel like an underworld he is timidly visiting, an outsider among outsiders**.[39]

> Pour ces coreligionnaires, l'islam est moins une foi, simple habitude, une facette de **leur condition de pauvres étrangers** dans un pays qui persiste à se penser blanc, de langue anglaise et chrétien. Ahmad, **outsider entre les outsiders, traverse timidement ces rues qui lui apparaissent comme un monde ténébreux**.[40]

Ahmad refers to an 'alien' 'underclass' that resists the label of foreignness that would conveniently label Ahmad as Other, while the status of these 'co-religionists' equally resists a neat labelling of a unified Muslim 'Self'. The translated novel struggles to capture this same, non-geographical sense of difference: while preserving the term 'outsider' in translation, the phrase 'pauvres étrangers' fails to shirk the connotations of immigration and citizenship that Ahmad, in the English text, resists. In the translated novel, this reference to 'étrangers' could exist as something of a red herring, perhaps indicating that Ahmad views these 'co-religionists' as somehow foreign in comparison to his own status as veritable American, thus consolidating the sense of conflict and threat Ahmad perceives in all those beyond his own conceptualisation of faith. In addition, the French text resists the religious, or at the very least transcendental, connotations of 'underworld' in translation: harking back to early references to 'ichor' and mythological imagery at the start of the novel, this term is rendered somewhat neutrally in translation. With 'un monde ténébreux', the French text favours a spatial or, perhaps more

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[39] *Terrorist,* p.244.
[40] *Terroriste,* p.253.

importantly, a non-religious conceptualisation of identity and belonging over the English text's firmer sense of religiosity. Yet what aligns the two passages is the equivalent position that Ahmad occupies, exceptional in its lack of belonging, even amongst those with whom he might claim an allegiance or similarity: an exceptionalism that is negotiated in relation to faith and the transcendental once again.

Updike's axes of proximity

In reading Ahmad's spatial and proximal rendering of the world as a form of empathic identification, it is possible to find another echo of Michael Rothberg's cognitive maps. Of particular pertinence are Rothberg's attempts to chart multidirectional readings of public memory, which offer an instructive, if not slightly simplistic, cipher through which the topography of Updike's novel might be read. Rothberg develops his call for 9/11 novels to function as cognitive maps, reaching beyond the frontiers of the nation state to interrogate national identity and citizenship as transcultural formulations, creating axes against which public memory might be plotted and mapped. For Rothberg, comparative readings of public memories might be mapped at the intersection of two axes: the first ─ the 'axis of comparison' ─ a linear continuum from the equation of memory narratives to their ultimate differentiation; the second ─ the 'axis of political affect' ─ a continuum from solidarity to direct competition.[41] The multitude of potential intersection across these axes creates the possibility for 'an exploration of political imaginaries in an age of transcultural memory', where previously competing or subordinate forms of memory are instead refigured as instances of 'transcultural borrowing, exchange and adaptation' where their comparison is ultimately a productive process of uncovering alternative readings of public memory.[42]

Though Rothberg does gesture towards a vision of his axes as capable of flipping 'antagonistic competitiveness to empathy', with a view to securing what he calls 'reflexive justice' – a somewhat convoluted term that is not interrogated or clearly defined in the article – his insistence on the multidirectionality of public memories depends on their fixed narrative positions. Indeed, Rothberg's article completely sidesteps any mention of empathy which for me, though serving his purpose in moving away from notions of competitive memory, consolidated by trauma theory's investment in the origins

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[41] Michael Rothberg, 'From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory', *Criticism*, Vol. 53, No.4 (2011), p.525.
[42] Ibid., pp. 525-6; p.524.

of trauma, is extremely problematic. The question in relation to *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*, therefore, is whether this process of mapping intersections of competing forms of lived experience – what I would argue serves as a form of mapping empathy – is a useful endeavour in charting the empathic potential located at the intersections of text and translation.

In *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*, it might be possible to reframe Rothberg's axes as a means of orientating the relationship between Ahmad and the world of the text, as constructed through the gaze of the would-be terrorist. Ahmad conceptualises his position relative to those around him in terms of proximity and transcendental distance, along a vertical axis that starts with God and terminates with what Ahmad considers to be the lowest of creatures: unbelievers. Perpendicular to this axis of transcendental distance and proximity is a horizontal plane of closeness to God, which allows Ahmad to justify his own exceptionalism – 'wrapped in his sensation of God standing beside him' – compared to the 'hopelessness of lives without God as a close companion.'[43] Even in identifying potential titles for these two axes, it becomes clear that applying Rothberg's schematic approach to mapping memory, or in this case empathy, is more complex than a linear representation might allow. Moreover, the process of mapping narrative positions within Rothberg's matrix is made all the more challenging with the addition of a parallel, translated text. While the axes enable a static representation of narrative perspectives and positions in both source and target texts – where one set of axes might be superimposed over another to identify concrete shifts in translation – the model depends on fixed narrative identities and equivalent conceptualisations of transcendence, proximity, and identification across the texts. Yet it is this fixity, as exposed through a series of translation shifts, that is not always present in *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*. For example, while in the English text this horizontal axis of closeness and familiarity with God values the proximity of God as a 'close companion', in translation, Ahmad recognises 'le désespoir de ces vies qui n'ont pas Dieu pour compagnon', where the closeness, whether spiritual, emotional or pseudo-physical, between Ahmad and his God is lost entirely.[44] Similarly, the sensation of a personified God 'standing beside' the devout protagonist is translated as a vaguer, less materialised, sense of 'la proximité de Dieu', that adopts the language of proximity and verticality, but eschews the sense of potential emotional

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[43] *Terrorist*, p.144; p.151.
[44] *Terroriste,* p.160.

closeness that the English text emphasises in each of these 'physical' encounters between Ahmad and his God.[45] Therefore, in order to contribute to a comparative reading of translation shifts, these axes must be derived from shared aspects of the source and target texts, if they are to move beyond a hierarchical relationship that would see the axes modelled on a single text. The same could be said of Rothberg's approach to multidirectional memory, where the trauma narratives in question must be comparable in the broadest terms if any equality or reciprocity between the two is to be secured.

Transcendental signifiers in translation: Locating the 'terrorist' world-view

Although functioning as the figurehead of Ahmad's vertical world-view of proximity and empathy, Ahmad's relationship with his God is exceptional in the texts, as it lacks the distinct empathic potential of all other relationships and encounters in the narrative. For Ahmad, an empathic encounter with the transcendental is largely impossible: such a relationship would not only require his God to function as a conceivable world-view or perspective that he might adopt and from which he might retreat, but would equally destabilise the entire system of proximity and distance on which his narrative depends. In this sense, Ahmad's world view requires a fixed pole from which vertical proximity might be measured, despite the inherent movement and oscillation of empathy. Moreover, while this point may not be fixed across text and translation, it does need to be stable in each.

The apex of Ahmad's world view is best measured by the presence and translation of transcendental signifiers. Transcendental signifiers are markers of a metaphysical world-view and, despite their essentially arbitrary nature, are used to guarantee the validity of the world-view they construct and describe. In this sense, signifiers such as God, Allah, Heaven, and Hell exist outside of a given narrative – their meanings are largely 'independent of [the] language' in which they are employed – and yet are crucial to the creation and viability of a transcendental perspective.[46] Reading *Terrorist* and its translation comparatively, it is possible to identify three distinct categories of transcendental signifiers, each of which is susceptible to shifts in translation: markers of universal concepts of faith and the transcendental (what I will call primary transcendental signifiers), Islam-specific signifiers and lastly, supplementary markers of a transcendental

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[45] *Terrorist,* p.144; *Terroriste*, p.153.
[46] Lin Zhu, 'The Translator-Centered Multidisciplinary Construction', (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012), p.66.

perspective that are not directly linked to overarching narratives on religion, belief or transcendence.

The opening chapter of *Terrorist and Terroriste* are saturated with markers of the protagonist's transcendental world-view, and Ahmad's narrative is littered with primary transcendental signifiers: those capitalised markers of the metaphysical that construct and reaffirm the validity of the religious narrative in which they appear. Read in the context of the narrative as a progressive whole, as this thesis has consistently attempted in its analysis of translation shifts, it is not surprising that the opening of the novel is so dense in references to the transcendental in representing the perspective of a would-be perpetrator who, at this early stage of the text, is perhaps at his most fervent and forthright. Therefore, it is to be expected that these overarching, primary signifiers are rendered accurately in the target text, in an example of translational equivalence across the novels: 'devils' –'démons', 'Straight Path' – 'la Voie', 'Infidels' – 'Mécréants', 'Prophet' – 'Prophète', 'Hell' – 'l'Enfer', 'God' – 'Dieu', 'the Living' – 'le Vivant', 'Satan' – 'Satan', and 'Paradise – 'le Paradis'.[47] The only example in these opening pages of a translational explicitation or intensification of these markers is in the translation of 'safety' as 'le Salut', converting a more oblique reference to religion into a veritable transcendental signifier.[48] It is already possible to distinguish two clear semantic groups within these terms; the first, those signifiers referring to a transcendental world-view in a general sense, while the second, more explicit set of linguistic markers points to a denominational – namely, Islamic – iteration of this perspective. Although no significant or visible translation shifts are secured in the translation of these signifier-heavy passages, the rendering of these linguistic markers of religiosity in translation is particularly significant when considered in comparison to the shifts secured elsewhere in the translated narrative, and foregrounds the significance of the cumulative approach to cross-textual analysis.

Linguistic markers of Islamic faith and practices, and the semantic fields to which these reference belong, are extended and made explicit throughout texts through the use of Qur'anic suras (transliterated and translated) in addition to the use of Arabic loan words. While there are some shifts with regards to individual words within this sub-category of transcendental signifiers, these linguistic markers are again maintained in

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[47] *Terrorist,* pp.3-7; *Terroriste,* pp. 9-13.
[48] *Terroriste*, p.10.

translation, creating a distinctly Islamic world-view across the opening chapters of both texts. These translation pairs include: 'kafir / infidèle', 'unbelievers / infidèles', 'worship / adoration', 'infidel (adj.) / incrédules (adj.)', 'the fearsome horse Buraq / la redoubtable jument Al-Buraq', and 'Mecca and Medina/ La Mecque et Médine.'[49] Though generally examples of translation equivalence, the most notable of the arbitrary shifts listed here (those shifts that result from linguistic or semantic constraints) is that of the Arabic loanword 'kafir', used consistently in Updike's text, to 'infidèle' or 'mécréante' in translation.[50] However, both of these translation solutions in French exist as equivalents to the term 'kafir', which also exists as a loan word in French. While the translation seems to shun a transliteration of the term from source to target text, both adjectives – 'infidèle' and 'mécréante' – denote unbelievers in a specifically Muslim context. As these translation shifts operate within a narrative that increasingly adopts the language of absolutism and fundamentalism, transcendental signifiers included, and they can therefore be safely viewed as examples of translational equivalence, rather than veritable translation shifts. Therefore, when considered as parallel texts, the trajectories of the novels, at least in their construction of an Islamic (I refrain here from the political connotations associated with the term 'Islamist') world-view, are here identical. Even visible transformations in translation – that in other texts have indicated a veritable translation shift– are here confined within the limits of their original semantic fields of transcendental reference.

It is the third category of these transcendental signifiers that is most susceptible to shifts in translation and which contributes to a decided divergence between source and target text. This subordinate category of transcendental signifiers is formed of those words and phrases in the novel that may be understood as extrapolations of a semantic field of transcendence, and yet which could also function independently of such a reading of the text. In short, these signifiers depend on the transcendental references created and sustained elsewhere in the text and its translation in order to function as such. As isolated transformations from source to target text, these translation shifts could be considered arbitrary shifts, yet when considered cumulatively – both in relation to each other, and to the narrative of religiosity and transcendence already carved out in both texts – they contribute to a wider translation shift in narrative tone and positioning.

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[49] *Terrorist/Terroriste* pairings: p.6/p.12, p.62/p.69, p.62/p.69, p.141/p.150, p.155/p.164, p.243/p.252.
[50] For use of 'infidèle': *Terroriste*, p.12, p.45, p.70; For use of 'mécréante': *Terroriste,* p.10, p.45.

In a scene where Ahmad is surrounded by the second-hand furniture he is to deliver – his purpose to provide the same comfort and indulgence that he steadfastly resists in his religious practices – the translation secures a decided shift from his quasi-spiritual description of the everyday, to a depiction of its depressing banality and baser, physical qualities.

> Ahmad smells arising from all this masses equipment for living **the mortal aura**, absorbed into the cushions and carpets and linen lampshades, of **organic humanity**, its pathetic six or so positions and needs repeated in a desperate variety of styles and textures between the mirror-crammed walls but amounting to the same daily squalor, the wart and boredom of it, the closed spaces, the floors and ceiling constantly measuring finitude, the **silent stuffiness** and hopelessness of lives without God as a close companion.[51]

> Entre les murs encombrés de miroirs, Ahmad sent monter de cette masse d'objets pour les vivants **l'odeur de mort** tapie dans les cousins, les tapis, les abat-jour en toile, l'odeur de **l'humanité corporelle**, avec ses cinq ou six pathétiques positions, le répétition inlassable de ses besoins, quelle que soit la désespérante diversité des styles et des textures suintant la même misère quotidienne, l'usure, l'ennui des espaces clos dont les sols et plafonds mesurent la finitude, **l'oppression du silence**, le désespoir de ces vies qui n'ont pas Dieu pour compagnon.[52]

Though not immediately obvious as examples of transcendental signification, when viewed comparatively, the three collocations highlighted above may together be seen as a permeation of the transcendental signifiers that saturate the opening of the novel, and which therefore provide a baseline against which the fatal trajectory of Ahmad's narrative might be measured. In the English text, the physical meets the intangible, and Ahmad's narrative is steeped in the same metaphorical and transcendental absolutisms of Sheikh Rashid's Quranic interpretations that Ahmad finds so unconvincing. Yet these absolutisms are tempered with reality; an organic, mortal and stuffy vision of physicality that sits uncomfortably alongside the transcendental vocabulary of Ahmad's world-view. The oscillation in the narrative voice in Updike's text is, in this extract, both explicit and jarring, and the furniture shop is granted an otherworldly quality.

In French, these jarring collocations are subdued, their infusion of the physical with the metaphysical switched for a baser description of the furniture store that carries a stronger sense of Ahmad's disgust and rejection of the everyday. Put simply, the translation tips the balance in favour of an awareness of the physicality and banality of

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[51] *Terrorist*, p.151.
[52] *Terroriste,* p.160.

American culture that has hovered at the peripheries of Ahmad's world-view until this point in the text. The subordinate transcendental signifiers found in the English text are suppressed in favour of a purely physical description of the everyday. Instead of a 'mortal aura' and 'organic humanity', in the translated text, Ahmad encounters the pervasive scent of death ('l'odeur de mort') and the stench of 'l'humanité corporelle': physical, or bodily, humanity. In stark contrast to earlier sections of the translation, Ahmad no longer glimpses flashes of transcendence in the world around him, but experiences a world that is physical, tangible and sensory. The adjective 'corporelle' emphasises the materiality of the furniture store, and the world of commodification and physical comforts in which Ahmad finds himself firmly entrenched, but also conceptualises mankind in a strictly corporeal and bodily sense, alluding to the same sense of revulsion with which Ahmad views the human body as sexualised, sweaty, and unclean.[53]

Lastly, the collocation 'silent stuffiness' undergoes a more concrete shift in meaning in translation, by way of a chassé-croisé translation, that sees the 'silent stuffiness…of lives without God as a close companion' recast in translation as 'l'oppression du silence…de ces vies qui n'ont pas Dieu pour compagnon', that is, 'the oppressive silence of these lives without God as a companion.'[54] On a syntactic level, the adjective 'silent' is converted to a nominal phrase, with the French noun 'silence' taking precedence in the translated sentence. In the French text, this lack of God's companionship feels more significant; an 'oppressive silence', rather than an inconvenient stuffiness, that renders the narrative more dogmatic in its perspective on a world without faith. Significantly, this phrase maintains the overarching transcendental signifier – God – in translation, as a kind of echo of the metaphysical markers of Ahmad's world-view from the original text. In this sense, a remnant of the transcendental signification in Updike's narrative is preserved, insofar as it illustrates the wider shifts secured in translation, setting up a contrast within the translated narrative itself, and even

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[53] This passage echoes the opening description of Joryleen as somehow repulsive, her appearance reduced to individual body parts or features, each aligned with an aspect of extreme physicality, or likened to consumerist products: 'The tops of her breasts push up like great blisters in the scoop neck of the indecent top that at its other ham exposes the fat of her belly and the contour of her deep navel. He pictures her smooth body, darker than caramel but paler than chocolate, roasting in that vault of flames and being scorched into blisters…" (*Terrorist*, p.9). Even from this early stage in the novel, Joryleen is connected with notions of sin and transgression, although the subtle shift is from her objectification – as the representation of 'evil' – to the temptation of transgression and uncleanliness.

[54] A translation strategy that involves a double grammatical transposition: in this case, the adjective in the ST is translated as a noun, while the noun 'stuffiness' is transposed as a noun in French, but one that takes on a adjectival relationship with the French noun 'silence'.

more so when considered in comparison with the English text. Indeed, the translation does not completely supress and erase all transcendental signifiers from the source text, but instead introduces a series of shifts – secured here in the transformation of collocations – to gesture towards a wider shift away from, or at least a problematised version of, the metaphysical tone of the original novel.

Proximity is not just a rendering of physical, or even metaphysical, distance between Ahmad and the other entities he encounters within the frame of religiosity and fundamentalism that defines his world-view. Crucially, by foregrounding the perspective of the would-be terrorist, the narrative engages in a dialogue on the reciprocity of empathic gestures and distance. Ahmad cannot be simply defined as the terrorist Other, just as he cannot be simply placed in the privileged position of the Self, yet he can uphold the position of empathiser from which all other positions and identities are, at least through his narrative gaze, positioned and encountered via empathic means. In this sense, Ahmad's narrative position is largely unfixed, and, in translation, is double-edged: translation creates a dual text with which the original text may enter into a discursive and comparative relationship, while the very process of translation functions as the (re)-creation and adaptation of a previously singular text. Therefore, it is Ahmad's agency as the instigator of empathic encounters that creates a baseline from which other proximal positions might be located.

The reciprocity of the empathic gesture is instrumental in understanding the proximal relationships and positions under scrutiny in the novel and its translation. As Gauthier has argued,

> [E]ngaging in empathy is a more reciprocal activity than other attempts at understanding the other, since it also requires self-diagnosis. I must seek to find that which makes me and the other the same. This implies the bi-directionality of the empathic gesture, since empathy becomes more than simply a way of assessing and judging the other, since it also require self-diagnosis.[55]

This bi-directionality, though falling short of the reciprocity required to secure true empathy, is perhaps the most accurate description of the empathic, though ultimately self-serving, gestures of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*. For example, while Ahmad's description of the 'low creatures' that he considers as evidence of a supernatural, if not transcendental, force is illustrative of his spatial and proximal understanding of the world, these instances

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[55] Tim Gauthier, *9/11 Fiction, Empathy and Otherness* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), p.30.

are not indicative of his capability for true reciprocity, but of a form of empathy that ultimately consolidates and strengthens his own position. Therefore, and I believe this is an important distinction to make, proximity does not necessarily equal empathy in either text. Instead, notions of distance and proximity serve as markers of empathic potential: a potential into which a comparative and reciprocal reading of text and translation taps.

In translation, particularly as the novel progresses, the potential for empathic gestures arguably increases, as the distance between Ahmad and the transcendental narrows. References to the 'mortal aura' and 'organic humanity' are described through increasingly physical and banal means, as the true nature of the distance between Ahmad and his God – lamented in the novel's opening line – becomes clear. By the novel's conclusion, the devils that have threatened Ahmad from the first lines of the novel have succeeded in their plot to separate the young Muslim from his faith: 'These devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God.'[56] Yet in translation, just as in the opening lines of the translated text, Ahmad's God has not been taken away. Instead, 'Ces démons, pense Ahmad, m'ont éloignée de mon Dieu.'[57] From this perspective, the transcendental distance and superiority of Ahmad's God is sustained, ensuring the same vertical framing of identities in the text is upheld even at the novel's conclusion. The crucial difference is that while this transcendental figurehead remains, Ahmad's position does not, as the events and empathic encounters of the novel have cut the protagonist adrift in the midst of the 'unbelievers', 'co-religionists' and 'low creatures' that populate the world of the text. In this sense, the opening lines of the translation foreshadow its conclusion in a narrative that traces Ahmad's increasingly untenable transcendental world-view, as far as his own position in such a world is conceived. In contrast, in the English text, such a trajectory is far harder to discern, as Ahmad's attempt to position himself as victim against those perpetrators or 'devils' responsible for the failure of his terrorist plot, and therefore of his faith as physical manifestation, risks falling into a binary configuration of Ahmad and his perceived 'others'.

Finding the empathic potential in transcendental relationships

For the most part, transcendental signifiers denote vertical distance: a void between the identities on Ahmad's vertical axis of faith and proximity. From this

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[56] *Terrorist*, p.310.
[57] *Terroriste*, p.320.

perspective, order and verticality is maintained, enabling Ahmad to secure his own exceptionalism and occupy a superior position over the 'co-religionists' and 'non-believers' of the narrative, while preserving God's divine power. However, under pressure to perform the fervency of his faith while struggling to resist the pull of those fellow beings to whom he has tried so hard to be empathically immune, Ahmad finds that his carefully-constructed axes might be contracted, narrowed and even destabilised to allow for empathic encounters. While both narratives consistently articulate the void between the transcendental and the physical, the furniture store plays host to a marked shift in Ahmad's conceptualisation of their proximity, hinting at a possible interaction and interdependence between the two.

> …here in this great showroom Ahmad feels himself about to be enlisted in the armies of trade, and **despite the near presence of the God of whom all material things form the mere shadow,** he is excited. The Prophet himself was a merchant. *Man never wearies of praying for good* things, says the forty-first sura. Among these good things **the world's** manufacture must be included. Ahmad is young; there is plenty of time, he reasons, for him to be forgiven for materialism, if forgiveness is needed. **God is closer than the vein in his neck,** and He knows what it is to desire comfort, else He would not have the next so comfortable: there are carpets and couches in Paradise, the Qur'an affirms.[58]

In contrast to the void between the transcendental and the physical, established elsewhere through the use of transcendental signifiers, this excerpt marks a shift in Ahmad's conceptualisation of their proximity, hinting at a possible interaction and interdependence between the two. In this scene, Ahmad has already observed the jarring proximity of 'organic humanity' and the 'mortal aura'; a fusion of the metaphysical and the physical that is tempered with banality in translation.[59] Yet as Ahmad's tour of the furniture store continues, this previously superficial proximity deepens, and material objects come to act as physical manifestations of 'the God of whom all material things form the mere shadow': tangible evidence of the transcendental. Crucially, it is Ahmad who is capable of bearing witness to the immaterial made material, further consolidating the exceptional position and superiority that his perceived closeness to God entails. It is no coincidence that this constriction of the distance between the material and immaterial is matched by an attempt at forging an empathic connection between Ahmad and God via these physical means: 'Ahmad feels himself about to be enlisted in the armies of trade… The Prophet himself was a merchant.' Claiming such shared experience does not negate the distance

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[58] *Terrorist,* p.152.
[59] *Terrorist*, p.151.

that Ahmad has constructed between himself and the transcendental elsewhere in the texts. Indeed, if empathy is the process of 'identification with an other and a determined insistence on the other's alterity', then the difference between these two positions must be maintained if an empathic encounter is to be secured.[60] In addition, it has been argued elsewhere that empathy is an inherently biased process, whereby 'we tend to empathize more with those whose needs are salient, who are similar to ourselves, and who are close by', and the construction or perception of proximity and similarity enables an empathic encounter to take place.[61] Therefore, at this point, the vertical distance that defines the relationship between Ahmad and the divine is countered by a perceived similarity; a proximity of experience that is inherently material in nature, and which creates the possibility for Ahmad to instigate an empathic gesture.

In contrast, the translated text maintains the comparative relationship between the physical and the transcendental that has thus far defined Ahmad's world-view.

> …mais c'est dans le grand showroom d'Excellency qu'Ahmad sent qu'il va être enrôlé dans les armées du commerce et, **malgré la proximité de Dieu ça l'excite**. Le Prophète lui-même était marchand. "L'homme ne se lasse jamais de prier pour les biens", dit la sourate XLI et, parmi ces biens, il faut inclure ceux qui sont fabriqués **ici-bas**. Ahmad est jeune, il a tout le temps, raisonne-t-il, d'être pardonné pour son matérialisme, s'il doit être pardonné. Dieu, plus proche **de lui** que la veine de son cou, sait ce qu'est le désir de confort, sinon il n'aurait pas fait au Paradis un séjour aussi confortable, avec es tapis et des lits de repos, comme le dit le Coran.[62]

In the translation, material goods are not signs of God's presence in the physical world: instead, their inferiority serves to consolidate the vertical apex and superiority of a God 'auprès duquel toute chose matérielle n'est qu'une ombre'.[63] The use of 'auprès' here is instrumental in clarifying the relationship between the transcendental and the material, as this preposition suggests proximity and closeness, but not necessarily a direct relationship, and certainly not a hierarchy in the same way that prepositions denoting vertical distance or subordination would secure. This shadowy realm of the physical reappears towards the end of the novel, where the ethnically-diverse suburbs of the city are, at least to the Ahmad of the translated text, 'un monde ténébreux.'[64] In the original

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[60] Nils Bubandt and Rane Willerslev, 'The Dark Side of Empathy', p.7.
[61] Zahavi and Michael, p.1; Paul Bloom, 'Against Empathy', *Boston Review*, 39.5 (2014), 14-19, <https://bostonreview.net/forum/paul-bloom-against-empathy> [accessed 13/06/2016].
[62] *Terroriste,* p.161.
[63] Back translation: 'a God, close to whom the materiel is nothing more than a shadow.'
[64] *Terroriste,* p.253.

text, Ahmad imagines Islam as 'a filigreed doorway into the supernatural' to which the impoverished Muslims of the city limits have no access. However, this reference is completely omitted in translation, which instead describes these areas as nothing more than a strictly physical, 'world of shadows'.[65] Once more, the possibility of movement between the physical and transcendental – the image of the doorway is critical in capturing the bi-directionality of such a movement between the two realms – is rejected in the translation, in favour of a rendering of the passage that moves away from the transformative possibilities of an empathic encounter with the Other, whether this be with God or with the 'co-religionists' in comparison to whom Ahmad considers himself superior.[66]

The French text further consolidates the relationship between God and the material as one of proximity and comparison with two additional translation shifts. Rather than describing the 'world's manufacture', Ahmad clarifies that the material refers to all that is fabricated 'down here', or 'ici-bas', in a translation shift that sees the mortal realm explicitly placed in a subordinate and vertically-inferior position. Furthermore, rather than attempting an empathic gesture in recognising his own similarities with the 'merchant-Prophet', Ahmad firmly positions himself amongst the material, where God is closer **to him** than the vein in his neck ('plus proche **de lui** que la veine de son cou'). In this sense, the axes of proximity, both of vertical distance and of horizontal closeness, are made more explicit in translation, and yet lack the empathic potential present in the English text. This loss of empathic potential, where the possibility of empathic gestures is not maintained or secured in translation, is two-fold: first in the sense that Ahmad does not attempt an empathic relationship with God, and secondly, in the absence of reciprocity or the possibility of a dual gesture across the physical/transcendental divide.

The furniture store stages a later, and perhaps Ahmad's boldest, attempt at securing an empathic relationship with God, despite his explicit acknowledgement that any such gesture is considered blasphemous within his faith. Lying next to a naked Joryleen – now working as a prostitute that Charlie Chehab has 'hired' for Ahmad – Ahmad confesses that he feels: 'this yearning to join God, to alleviate His loneliness.'[67] No sooner are the words out of his mouth than he recognizes them as blasphemy: 'In the

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[65] *Terrorist,* p.244.
[66] Ibid.
[67] *Terrorist*, p.226.

twenty-ninth sura it is written, *Allah does not need His creatures' help*.'[68] Though the translation of this sura into French – 'Dieu se suffit à lui-même, il n'a pas besoin de l'Univers' – offers an interesting translation shift away from a reiteration of 'organic humanity', these translations are taken from an existing translation of the Qur'an, and therefore cannot function as evidence in this comparative discussion. However, it is noteworthy that Ahmad's boldest attempt at an empathic relationship with God is countered with a passing reference to a sura, rather than an in-depth reflection or justification of this faith, as has occurred throughout the narrative. Moreover, this attempt at empathy, and at securing a gesture of proximity along the horizontal axis of closeness to God, occurs at the precise moment where the vertical axis of distance and proximity, that has exalted Ahmad's superior position over the lowly non-believers of the text, is constricted to its most condensed form. With Joryleen, the empathic void that has assured the vertical distance between herself, the 'low creatures' for whom Ahmad admits feeling pity, and the superiority of Ahmad's positioning on such an axis of transcendence and physicality, is almost broken.

The English text acknowledges and makes explicit the transformative effects of such a moment of transgression:

> Joryleen puts her hands on each of his buttocks through the black jeans and by pulling him rhythmically into her pushing softness draws him **up and up** into **a convulsive transformation**, a **vaulting inversion** of his knotted self like that, perhaps, which occurs when the soul passes at death into Paradise. The two young bodies cling together, panting **climbers** who have attained a ledge.[69]

Crucially, Joryleen does not ascend from an inferior position to achieve the verticality that Ahmad possesses: instead, she is the catalyst of a transformative experience that sees Ahmad reaching heights that the stringency of this vertical conceptualisation of identity and space has scarcely allowed. By succumbing to his baser urges, Ahmad experiences a 'convulsive transformation' and 'vaulting inversion' that sees his being directly influenced by an empathic interaction with another (not an other). The 'vaulting' heights that Ahmad reaches through such an experience, whether in emotional or even spiritual terms, signals that this pivotal moment witnesses the joining of the physical and the transcendental. Indeed, that such an experience takes place in the furniture store – amongst the objects that represent the physical, material shadow of God's presence – is

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[68] Ibid., p.226.
[69] Ibid.

no coincidence, and again suggests that Ahmad's engagement with empathy as a reciprocal and dual gesture is capable of destabilising the spectral axes he has otherwise constructed to distance and distinguish himself form those around him.

However, in translation, Ahmad's first sexual experience is not figured as an empathic gesture, and his intimacy with Joryleen is not allowed to threaten the carefully-constructed verticality of the transcendental.

> Joryleen pose une main sur chacune des fesses d'Ahmad, sous son jean, et les pressent rythmiquement contre son corps doux, le faisant bander, bander **de plus en plus dur**, en une **convulsion, une inversion radicale** du nœud de son être – semblable, peut-être, à celle que connait l'âme du mort, soudain transporté au Paradis. Les deux jeunes corps s'agrippent l'un à l'autre, des alpinistes haletants qui ont atteint une corniche.[70]

While in the original text, Ahmad is drawn 'up and up', in the translation, Joryleen's attentions wind the protagonist tighter and tighter – 'le faisant bander, bander de plus en plus dur' – extending the image of the knot that his climax will undo. Yet more significant still is that his 'convulsion' is not described as transformative in any way, just as the 'inversion' he experiences may be radical ('une inversion radicale'), but is in no way 'vaulting' or transcendent. In Updike's original, the verticality that has defined Ahmad's world-view thus far, ensuring his empathic immunity to those around him is, in this moment, revealed to be all the more transformative when experienced as a true, empathic connection with another human being. In contrast, by reading the translation shifts in the French text cumulatively, the vertical distance that has been effectively mitigated elsewhere in the text is here extended, and so the potential for this transformative moment to break the vertices upon which Ahmad's world-view is constructed cannot be fully realised. The result is a steadier degradation of the verticality present in the English text, rather than a clear cut moment of transgression and transformation.

The horizontal axis of closeness and familiarity

Elsewhere in the text, the sense of closeness to, or familiarity with, God – that I have described elsewhere as a horizontal axis of proximity – is extended to incorporate the non-believers, or others, with whom Ahmad comes into contact. It is in these scenarios that this second, horizontal axis is most helpful, particularly in relation to the

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[70] *Terroriste,* p.236.

English text, where encounters with the 'others' of Ahmad's world-view are not experiences in direct reference to the verticality of faith and transcendence. Instead, closeness and familiarity are consistently experienced as an encounter with the unclean: the 'unclean' Central High School students that 'lack true faith', the 'unclean [that] appear to shine' in Joryleen's 'kafir church', and the low creatures that 'vex' Ahmad 'with their uncleanness' are all defined by their dirty, unsanitary nature.[71] Even Joryleen comes to adopt this language, preserving Ahmad's virginity while claiming agency, and therefore responsibility, for their sexual encounter: 'Don't you do a thing, Allah can blame me. I can take it, I'm just a woman, **dirty** anyway.'[72] It is during this transgressive encounter that the uncleanness that has previously inspired revulsion in Ahmad elsewhere in the text, instead entices the young protagonist: 'He wants to join her in uncleanness.'[73] These encounters, then, are entrenched in the physical, and are experienced through the lens of materiality and squalor of New Prospect against which Ahmad's faith strives to succeed.

In contrast, the French text renders these encounters in the language of faith and verticality that has defined Ahmad's spiritual experiences through the translated novel. In translation, uncleanness is rendered as impurity, in a gesture towards the perceived sinful nature that, at the most basic level, defines Ahmad's impression of other people.[74] It is no longer Joryleen's 'uncleanness' that attracts Ahmad, but her 'impureté', as she acknowledges that, in the eyes of Ahmad's faith, she is not dirty but that: 'Je ne suis qu'une femme, et **mauvaise**, en plus'.[75] These two terms – 'impureté' and 'mauvaise' – are used to articulate the alluring sense of revulsion that, in the original text, defines Ahmad's contact with non-believers, as an extension of the vertical axis of faith and conformity that defines Ahmad's transcendental world-view.

The physicality of this contact between Ahmad and others is key to understanding how each text couches these encounters, as well as the imagery of contamination and contagion with which Updike's text engages. In *Terrorist* and *Terroriste*, it could be argued that the most basic step in Ahmad's empathic encounters with the other is a similar moment of potential contagion, not of an emotional state, but of their

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[71] *Terrorist* p.3; p.109; p.77.
[72] *Terrorist,* p.226.
[73] *Terrorist,* p.227.
[74] *Terroriste* p.3; p.117; p. 237.
[75] *Terroriste,* p.235.

'uncleanness' and 'impurity'. In line with the physical means through which Ahmad encounters the world around him, this contagion is secured, or at least made possible, through proximity and physical familiarity with the other. In other words, a contraction of distance between different identities along the horizontal axis of closeness. Early in the text, Ahmad confesses his admiration for his burgeoning physicality: his 'recently aquired height', 'his ripened manhood, his lengthened limbs, the upright, dense, and wavy crown of his hair, his flawless dun skin' and, despite the potentially blasphemous nature of such vanity, acknowledges that he 'does not wish his body marred', marked, or ruined by the attentions of the opposite sex.[76] However, the translation of this phrase fails to capture the indelibility, as well as the sense of being somehow ruined or sullied, of this term. In the French text, Ahmad risks being 'amoché' – literally 'messed' or 'banged up' – by these encounters: a term that captures a sense of physicality, but that fails to translate the sense of degradation and ruin that is represented by the 'unclean'.

I have deliberately suggested that the possibility of contamination and the implications of this uncleanness might also be understood as the risk of contagion, to link to another facet of empathy: emotional contagion. Defined by de Waal as the 'adoption – in whole or in part – of another's emotional state', emotional contagion is often distinguished from true empathy due to the vicarious relationship it promotes with the other.[77] While 'in empathy and sympathy, the experience you empathically understand or sympathetically care for remains that of the other', in emotional contagion, the emotion or emotional state in question is transferred to the subject/empathiser, disarming the subject or object of the process.[78] In this sense, emotional contagion is the most basic element in securing an empathic encounter, where the process of transferring an emotional state becomes one of reciprocity and virtual transfer. In the novels, the possibility of contagion, and therefore of an empathic encounter, is made possible by proximity, and yet this proximity is not equivalent across source and target text. In the English text, the horizontal axis of closeness and familiarity is negotiated in reference to the 'unclean', and the possibility that immersion in the purely physical offers Ahmad by way of transgressive physical, even sexual, encounters with the other. In contrast, in translation, to be 'unclean' is to be impure, and proximity is relocated along the axis of transcendental

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[76] *Terrorist,* p.9; p.18.
[77] F. B. de Waal, 'Putting the altruism back into altruism', p.283.
[78] Dan Zahavi, 'Simulation, projection and empathy', *Consciousness and Cognition* 17 (2008), 514-522, <http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1016/j.concog.2008.03.010> (p.516).

proximity, faith and religiosity that allow Ahmad to consistently articulate his position and encounters with others in vertical terms. In this sense, the translation undermines the possibility of a transgressive, physical act that might destabilise the transcendental hierarchy upheld by vertical conceptualisations of proximity and distance. This is perhaps the most incisive example of a shift in the position of empathiser, where the transgressive, and indeed empathic, potential of such encounters is renegotiated across the translation divide, and can no longer be found in the physical interactions of those positions along a horizontal axis of familiarity, closeness and reciprocity.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the problematic concept of literary authenticity: an issue bound up in complex issues of authorial intent, reader-reception, public narratives on 'appropriate' responses to the 9/11 attacks, and the perception of narrative inconsistencies. However, the term has been largely absent from the analysis of text and translation in this chapter, in a deliberate attempt to move away from didactic interpretations of the relationship between original works of fiction and their translations, and to resist prescriptive readings of 9/11 fiction. In this chapter, authenticity has served as something of a red herring, just as the novel's title serves as a misdirection from the empathic encounters, interactions and digressions that dictate the protagonist's identity and ultimate trajectory. *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* are built on interactions: moments of possible transgression or conformity that drive the narrative ever forward, exposing the world-view of the titular 'terrorist', and the location of the true others with whom the protagonist comes into contact. To a greater extent than in other chapters, the comparative positioning of *Terroriste*, parallel to Updike's original, has sought to double the potential reciprocity embedded in the English text. As Ahmad's trajectory and vertical conceptualisation of the world is adjusted and influenced by empathic encounters, so too does a comparative analysis of translation shifts – of the translated text as alternate reality – reveal the empathic potential in each narrative interaction.

Yet a comparative analysis of the texts does not expose a neat and central divergence of original and translation. Instead, considering the translation shifts documented in this chapter both comparatively and cumulatively, it is possible to locate two distinct shifts in the texts. The vertical axis of transcendental distance and proximity defines Ahmad's relationships and interactions in both texts, securing the divine power of

his God as the apex of such an axis, while ensuring his own exceptionalism in relation to the 'low creatures' and even lower non-believers that populate the protagonist's world-view. In his interactions with these low creatures, the English text consistently emphasises and consolidates the transcendental void between Ahmad and such positions. In these excerpts, Ahmad's position as empathiser is static, entrenched in the strict verticality that ensures his proximity to God and the instructive, yet ultimately undesirable, condition of such creatures. Furthermore, in terms of empathy, these interactions are distinctly self-centred, consolidating Ahmad's exceptionalism as well as the superiority of the God to whom he, above all others, claims allegiance. Conversely, the translation seeks to mitigate the distance between Ahmad and these creatures, dampening the sense of submission that both positions otherwise accept in deference to the strict verticality of God's position, and thus providing a more moderate reading of the empathic implication of this axis. Similarly, in the translation of transcendental signifiers, the French text is firmly entrenched in the physicality of Ahmad's reality, exposing the somewhat liberating experience of living in a world that is liberated, if only fleetingly, from the cloying and at times contradictory, presence of the transcendental. The result is a decided shift in the narrative trajectories of each text: the French translation creating a narrative journey of revelation and discovery, while the English text seems stilted, forever oscillating between the worlds of the material and the transcendental, with little sign of character progression or development.

However, I would argue that the dissonance of the original text – the oscillation and sometimes clunky fusion of the transcendental and physical, that several critics have interpreted as narrative inconsistencies – defines the origins of the novel's empathic encounters, and that the loss of such discordance in the translated novel results in the most notable shift across the two texts. The result is a marked shift in what is at stake in empathic encounters. In translation, strict vertical distance is often mitigated in favour of a linear narrative trajectory, that sees Ahmad's transcendental world-view steadily eroded by the pressing physicality of the everyday, with the majority of empathic encounters centred around Ahmad and low creatures, and their interactions within the material realm. In Updike's text, the dissonance created by maintaining a strict vertical world-view alongside the pressing proximity of the physical opens up the possibility of interaction, and even reciprocity, between the two. Staged in the materiality of the Excellency Furnishing showroom, and catalysed by his sexual encounter with Joryleen, the original

text reaches towards the possibility of an empathic encounter with the transcendental, and the potential transgression that overstepping the boundaries of vertical distance and difference entail. In these instances, the horizontal framing of closeness and familiarity is instrumental in allowing Ahmad to negotiate his relationship with those both above and below his own exceptional position through empathic encounters that, though ultimately self-centred, recognise and maintain the position of the other. Therefore, while the original text sacrifices the linearity of a progressive narrative trajectory, and overlooks the empathic potential in interactions with low creatures, it does gesture towards the transgressive potential of empathic encounters that supersedes the vertical axis of proximity and distance, in a reading made possible by a comparative reading of text and translation.

A parallel reading of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* has been instrumental in reaching the above conclusions. First, by constructing comparable axes of transcendental proximity and horizontal conceptualisations of closeness and familiarity, it has been possible to locate shifts in the positioning of Ahmad as empathiser, and therefore to trace divergences in the investment and direction of empathic encounters throughout and across both texts. Moreover, this comparative model for translation analysis has performed its own form of empathic doubling. As such, by replicating the intended reciprocity of the empathic gestures in the narrative, this chapter has sought to understand what precisely is at stake in empathic encounters: whether notions of authenticity, the location of the perceived 'other', or indeed the (in)stability of the empathiser himself. In doing so, this comparative analysis has begun to dispel the dominance that the concepts of authenticity and difference hold over 9/11 texts and their translations, and foregrounds the potential of a comparative reading of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* that enacts the very empathic encounters upon which both texts are founded.

CHAPTER 4

Empathy, Exceptionalism and the Imaginative Failings of *The Zero and Le Zéro*

In Jess Walter's *The Zero,* and its French translation *Le Zéro*, protagonist Brian Remy's 'failure of imagination' sees one of the most enduring discourses on 9/11 literature made manifest.[1] Richard Gray's seminal appraisal of 9/11 fiction identified the genre's greatest failing as its inability to reach beyond the domestic realm: beyond troubled marriages, complex parent-child relationships, and familial experiences of bereavement. For John Duvall, this domesticity, as it is explored in *The Zero*, is a means to an end, in so far as it allows for an insight into 'the ways in which, in the aftermath of the attacks, the felt need for exceptional individuals leads to an identification of most Americans (particularly those working for the State - whether victim, cowards, or even potential villains – as homeland heroes'.[2] Although the tell-tale signs of domesticity are present in the *The Zero* and *Le Zéro,* this critical discussion focuses on those aspects and stylistic devices that liberate readings of the texts from the largely reductive themes of insularity, domesticity, and individual experiences of victimhood. While the text and translation are, undeniably, grounded in the interior world of a '9/11 first responder turned counter-terrorism agent', neither narrative follows the bildungsroman-esque journey through trauma, victimhood and recovery that has fuelled many of the novels of this genre.[3]

The Zero begins with Brian Remy, a policeman and 9/11 first responder, face down on his living room floor with a gunshot wound to the head. Whether the result of a gun-cleaning accident or a failed suicide attempt, Remy's injury is forgotten as the novel charts his fragmented experience of the aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers, impeded by his degenerating eyesight, his severely compromised memory and apparent failures of his imagination (the enduring remnants of his traumatic experience, if indeed they are symptoms of his trauma at all). Recruited by a clandestine government agency, Remy is tasked with tracking down March Selios, a suspected 9/11 conspirator, in a case where the only lead is a recipe card for pecan-crusted sole. In the process of unravelling the Selios case (or lack thereof), Remy is involved in a series of increasingly morally

[1] Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Gray', *American Literary History*, 21.1 (2009), 152–158, <http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1093/alh/ajn040> (p.153).
[2] John N. Duvall, 'Homeland Security and the State of (American) Exception(alism):
Jess Walter's The Zero and the Ethical Possibilities of Postmodern Irony ', *Studies in the Novel,* 45.2 (2013), (279-297) <www.jstor.org/stable/41955662. > (p.281).
[3] Ibid., p.281.

dubious activities: a relationship with March's sister, April, the torture of a terrorist informant, culminating in funding a contrived terrorist cell, made up entirely of competing agency moles save Remy's genuine terrorist contact. Yet within this increasingly violent chain of events, Remy seemingly has no concept of cause and consequence, and jumps from episode to episode with no recollection of how he arrived there, or any acknowledgement of the repercussions that his essentially destructive actions might have. The result is an ironic deconstruction of the American hero of exceptionalism: a portrait of individualism unravelled at the hands of competing public narratives and forces, where voyeurism and plausible deniability take centre stage.

Although both text and translation are reminiscent of the aspects of domesticity that have come to typify the 9/11 literary genre, neither narrative follows the bildungsroman-esque journey through trauma, victimhood and recovery that has fuelled many of the novels of this genre. Instead, the distinct failings of Remy's imagination that drive the narrative ever forward – whether genuine, or the product of hyperbole and narrative unreliability – are more closely tied to overarching narratives on voyeurism, exceptionalism and empathy than to a subjective lens on first-hand experiences of trauma and its repercussions. I use the term exceptionalism here to refer to American exceptionalism in what I understand to be its post-9/11 iteration: namely, that American suffering in the wake of 9/11 is consistently and comprehensively considered to be somehow unprecedented and exceptional. It is what lurks behind attestations that 9/11 marked a watershed moment in contemporary history. The spectre of this exceptionalism is bound up in 9/11 fiction, both in the well-documented and very public crisis of the American novelist, and in the fictional plots that prioritise American victimhood and the cultural conditions for trauma and recovery. In contrast, Walter's novel is unique in its systematic rejection and dismantling of exceptionalism, and highlights the ironic construction of a concept that sees the individual victim placed in an ivory tower of the making of politicians, the media, and pervasive public narratives on grief, entitlement and accountability.

In line with this deconstruction of the 'exceptional' victim, the private realm of both text and translation is not revealed as a potential space for renegotiating trauma in personal, and therefore (it is assumed) meaningful terms, but as a staging ground for wider insecurities concerning the problematic and pervasive nature of narratives on trauma and victimhood that would hold Remy up as an example of human triumph in the

face of catastrophe. *The Zero* is bound up in the visual realm, the imagination serving as a stage for visualising trauma and experience beyond the bounds of conventional forms of temporality and causality: a crucial contributor to the novel as fertile ground for translation comparison, particularly in terms of how translation shifts might function as ciphers for greater shifts in narrative cohesion, characterisation and style. The key to deciphering the significance of these instances of translation is in identifying moments of empathic potential, as created, manipulated and emphasised through the interaction between text and translation. Yet significantly, this potential remains ultimately unrealised, and this discussion will focus on the role of comparative analysis in uncovering and deciphering the empathic trajectory of each text through a diverse range of translation shifts, from equivalence and cross-textual cohesion, to empathic placeholders and text-translation dissonance.

Imaginative failings

Sabotage and the unreliable narrator: Remy's 'failed' imagination

The cohesion and reliability of Remy's perspective is severely compromised by the failure of his imagination, and an apparent inability to visualise or virtually experience trauma that has severe repercussions on Remy as empathic agent. More challenging still are the glaring inconsistencies in what the protagonist claims to be true, and therefore in the narrative as a form of reliable testimony: Remy regularly proves himself capable of imagining traumatic scenes from the fall of the towers. However, although Remy superficially represents the privileged perspective of victim, as well as the coveted status of first-responder and eye witness, these imagined scenarios never involve Remy himself and are instead focused solely of the experience of others. While Remy's experiences of the present moment swiftly jolt mid-scene, these imaginings often fade in, triggered by a moment of perception – an item of clothing, a sound, a landscape – that act as gatekeepers to an imagination that Remy claims not to possess. Late one night, roaming the Zero, Remy stumbles across a clothing store, and inspecting one of the garments, he tries 'to think of a scenario in which its owner was alive, but his imagination failed him.'[4] However, when tasked with imagining the woman's suffering, he is able to conjure a detailed image of the imaginary woman in both source and target texts:

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[4] Jess Walter, *The Zero* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), p.38. All subsequent references will refer to this edition.

'…wearing a sweater **just like this one** as she huddled in the smoke-choked stairwell with a bunch of strangers and stragglers, the brave and unlucky in the same narrow space when it began, the thunder of the world **clapping down to nothing**.'[5]

'Et elle portait **ce pull** lorsqu'elle se serra en compagnie d'une bande d'inconnus dans la cage d'escalier envahie de fumée. Quand les courageux et les malchanceux étaient regroupés dans le même espace exigu, **attendant** que le tonnerre du monde **les réduise à néant.**[6]

Two key shifts across the text and translation are highlighted above, with the translated text modifying the boundaries between reality and imagination, and shifting the focus of the scene onto the victims themselves as objects of the action described. In the original text, the stranger in the towers wears a sweater 'just like this one', maintaining the distance between the object Remy encounters in the real world, and the imagined scene sparked by the item. However, these boundaries are eroded in translation, where the woman wears 'ce pull', *this* sweater, with the deictic marker indicating that Remy is projecting the visual imprint of the present onto his imagination, finding overlap between the two. This connection between the two visual realms with which Remy must work to attempt to locate a third – his memory – is further extended in translation to form a sense of continuity between the two, as well as a shared temporality. In the French text, 'Il [Remy] essaya de réfléchir à un scenario dans lequel son propriétaire était **toujours** en vie, mais son imagination lui fit faux bond'.[7] The addition of 'toujours' is significant, signalling that Remy attempts to imagine a scenario in which the woman is *still* alive: further tethering the imagined scenario to the present moment, and to a chronological temporality that acknowledges the past, present and potential future realms in which Remy's imagination might place the woman.

Such continuity and causality aligns with the other-led perspective that Remy adopts in translation. In the original text, a disconnected Remy focuses on imagining the action of the fall of the towers, where neither he nor his imagined victims encroach on the descriptive and violent elements of the scene. However, in the parallel translated passage, the focus shifts to the victims, emphasising their position as objects of the violent force of the collapse of the towers, as mirrored in the syntax of the sentence in French:

Quand les courageux et les malchanceux étaient regroupés dans le même espace

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[5] *The Zero*, p.39.
[6] *Le Zéro*, p.48.
[7] *Le Zéro*, p.47.

exigu, **attendant** que le tonnerre du monde **les réduise à néant.**[8]

> [When the brave and the unlucky were huddled in the same cramped space, waiting for the thunder of the world to reduce them to nothingness.][9]

This translation shift is not only emphatic in its terminal position in the sentence, bookending the action with a human perspective on the violence, but also in the pronominal use of 'les', reiterating the position of the victims as a collective group subjected to the brutality of the scene. In contrast, the pronominal position in the English text is occupied by an impersonal force – 'when **it** began, the thunder of the world clapping down to nothing' – in a sentence from which the present participle 'attendant', which indicates a lived and present human experience in the towers, is entirely absent.

Remy's resistance of the possibility of an empathic reading of his imagined scenarios introduces the problematic question of how far an unreliable narrator might destabilise the potential for empathic gestures and structures within the narrative. For example, following his visualisation of the woman in her sweater, Remy claims that:

> '[he] couldn't see it that way, didn't imagine them coming together in the end, grabbing hold of one another in burning corridors or comforting each other as the heat rose and the ground beckoned.'[10]

Recurrent paralipsis in the text not only muddies the issue of narrator reliability, but also problematises the use of free indirect discourse in such passages, where the narrative voices of both author and protagonist fall under suspicion in terms of their transparency and accuracy.[11] It is worth noting that there is no suggestion, either from the protagonist or from literary and structural elements of the novel, that these imagined scenarios are veiled memories of Remy's own experience as a first-responder: these scenes are entirely distinct from the genre of revelatory, and somehow cathartic, flashbacks that punctuate

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[8] *Le Zéro*, p.48.

[9] Any back translations of extended French texts will be shown as above: directly following the French quotation, inside square brackets.

[10] *The Zero* pp.74-5.

[11] Paralipsis is a rhetorical device for emphasis, in which an idea is deliberately suggested through a cursory explanation or mention of a given subject, though any detail or facts are omitted. For example, beginning a sentence with 'not to mention…' is a marker of paralipsis, as it suggests that what will follow plays a significant role, despite little detail or information being revealed. In *The Zero*, paralipsis functions as something of a 'wrong-footing' tactic, where the protagonist claims to be unable to remember his traumatic experiences, or indeed incapable of imagining how they might have played out, before launching into a detailed rendering of the trauma itself. What is particularly interesting is that a speaker who uses paralipsis generally does so tactically, as a deft way of demonstrating a more nuanced or in-depth knowledge of a subject than the conversation allows. This, in Remy's case, introduces the possibility of a wilfully deceptive protagonist, capable of switching between the persona of calculating counter-terrorist agent and hapless, traumatised victim. In short, such instances suggest that Remy's failures of imagination are perhaps not quite what they seem.

Keith's experience of trauma and recovery in DeLillo's *Falling Man*. Furthermore, the episodic nature of the narrative ensures that no reflection on, or engagement with, the implications of these visions of suffering ever occurs, and that Remy retains the absolute nature of his emotional detachment. Yet in translation, a thread of subjectivity and possible empathy – if only tokenistic – remains consistent.

> Remy ne voyait pas les choses de la même manière, il n'imaginait pas ces personnes unies **dans leurs derniers instants**, s'agrippant les uns aux autres dans les couloirs en flammes, se réconfortant à mesure que la chaleur montait et que **le sol se dérobait sous leurs pieds**.[12]

> [Remy didn't see things in the same way, he didn't imagine these people together in their last moments, clinging to each other in flaming corridors, comforting each other as the heat rose and the ground gave way beneath their feet.]

While the use of 'could' in the original text suggests that Remy is unable, perhaps despite some degree of effort, to humanise a traumatic experience from which he is somehow disconnected, the French text is emphatic in Remy's inability to see or imagine the reality of the trauma, despite the graphic description that immediately follows. The balance between narrative voices that is upheld in the free indirect discourse of the original passage is therefore manipulated, and weighted towards a sense of clarity and definition that would typically be associated with narrator or author intervention in the narrative. From this perspective, the shift above is not necessarily confined to the device of paralipsis which, in this instance, is all the more pronounced when converted from the uncertainty of the conditional tense in English to a definitive present state in French. In addition, it is possible that shifts in paralipsis, and in the certainty with which Remy professes to a failure of imagination, may also reflect the extent to which the translated text uses free indirect discourse as a device for emphasising narrative contrasts, casting further doubt on Remy's narrative reliability. In addition to this shift, two additions in translation emphasise the presence of the 'others' of Remy's vision, including an acknowledgment that the victims are living their last moments, 'leurs derniers instants', in a gesture towards a linear, though terminal, chronology as seen previously in the addition of 'toujours'. Moreover, in a shift away from the impersonal subject-verb construction of the original text, where 'the heat rose and the ground beckoned' – in translation, 'le sol se dérobait sous leurs pieds' – and the scene concludes with a close-up image of human suffering.

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[12] *Le Zéro,* p.82

Pronominal shifts in translation are particularly useful markers of points of divergence between the source text and target translation, and offer an insight into how the French text consistently manipulates the terrain of Remy's imagination to explore perspectives on trauma that are other-led.

> Remy se dit qu'un jour le monde entier sera réduit à une poussière aussi fine. Elle remplacera l'air, et **les gens** ne feront pas que la respirer, **ils** la goûteront, **ils** la sentiront sur **leurs** peaux, dans **leurs** bouches et au plus profond de **leurs** os, comme un frisson glacial. Et le monde baignera dans une poussière de plus en plus fine jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus que cette absence de substance et de sens.[13]

> [Remy told himself that, one day, the whole world will be reduced to a fine dust. It will replace the air, and people will do nothing but breathe it in, they will taste it, they will feel it on their skin, in their mouths and deep in their bones, like a glacial chill. And the world will bathe in a dust, finer and finer, until there is nothing other than this absence of substance and sense.]

The apocalyptic vision of the future that Remy paints in the translated text is one experienced by a defined and fully-formed group of victims; the repeated pronouns emphasising the specificity of the otherwise generic 'les gens'. Yet the use of plural pronouns in the above example is highly unusual in French when referring to a defined group who would generally share, at least linguistically, a single mouth or skin. Instead, the translation uses the plural 'leurs' – 'leurs peaux', 'leurs bouches' – in order to illustrate that this collective group is also made up of identifiable and distinct individuals. Granted, these plurals could easily be discounted as an over-reliance on the syntactic structures of the original text, which are then carried over into the translated novel, as is the case with isolated examples of spoken dialogue. However, given that these moments of other-centred imagination are, as this chapter argues, indicative of moments of empathic potential, I believe it is much more likely that this passage is part of a wider, cohesive narrative on the nature of empathy. By creating a group of victims who are at once individuals, yet equally united in their traumatic experiences, the scene has the potential to be converted into an empathic gesture on Remy's behalf. Whether this empathy is felt for an imagined individual, or a more generic group, the potential for such a connection is present, and yet ultimately wasted. Again, there is no indication from the text as to whether this ignorance of the possibility for empathy is indeed a deliberate act of resistance from Remy, or an oversight that can be attributed to his literal, and figurative, short-sightedness, and I would argue that deciphering whether there is agency

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[13] *Le Zéro*, p.52

in such a 'decision' is not the most fruitful line of inquiry in this instance. More compelling is how the translated text constructs this possibility and introduces a moment of decision-making that once more calls the reliability, transparency and empathic capability of Remy's narrative voice into question: a process which can only be identified through a comparative approach to text and translation.

This comparative approach illustrates how, in the original text, it is possible to identify the singular pronouns with which the plurality of the translated text directly contrasts.

> Remy could imagine that one day everything in the world would be reduced to such a fine dust – replacing even the air, so that **you** not only smelled it but tasted it, and felt it too, on **your** skin, in **your** mouth, deep to **your** bones like a chill, that the whole world would swim in dust – finer and finer until there was nothing but an absence of substance and meaning.[14]

The defined group of 'les gens' that populate Remy's imagination in translation are absent in the English text, replaced by a second-person 'you' that, at first glance, seems to oscillate between the possibility of a defined other being addressed in this passage, and a more generic, or impersonal pronoun, equivalent to the French 'on'. Although free indirect discourse has factored into this discussion of empathy and imagination, there is no indication from the text as a whole that this passage marks a moment of empathic connection with the reader: this 'you' does not reach out beyond the confines of the text to address an imagined reader. Instead, the second-person pronoun functions as a placeholder, so that neither Remy, nor a defined other, is implicated in a potential empathic gesture. In this sense, the multiplicity of the translated text is not grounded in the original, which instead absolves Remy of the responsibility, and indeed the agency, for enacting an empathic connection. Again, whether this is a deliberate choice on behalf of the protagonist is irrelevant in this discussion of empathy: it is the presence of such a loophole – a kind of empathy 'get-out-clause' – that makes the empathic pathways exposed, or indeed created, in the translation all the more significant. Furthermore, this shift cannot be attributed to the parallel shift in tense exemplified in the above passage. In translation, the contrast this passage poses to examples of paralipsis elsewhere in the text is heightened by the use of the future tense, which not only introduces a sense of certainty that these things *will* happen, but also extends the temporal reach of Remy's imagination into the future, as a tool for projecting forwards along a chronological and linear temporal

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[14] *The Zero,* p.44.

axis. In the original text, although the conditional use of 'could' and 'would' suggests a similar projection is possible, this sense of certainty is absent, and the passage instead favours a fluid framing of time that does not easily contain the imagined scenario to a distant future.

Across the texts, these scenes seem to reveal two Remys: the original Remy – detached, professing to a lack of imagination and yet bestowed with the potential for visualising traumatic experiences, and the translated Remy – equally disconnected, yet more steadfast and assured in his conceptualisation of the attacks as human trauma. Yet both these narrative techniques result in a form of narrative cohesion that captures Remy's empathic detachment from his imagined interactions with trauma and its repercussions. The creation of an external perspective, whether a woman in a sweater or a collective group, allows Remy to explore trauma as a visual, violent phenomena from which he is entirely absent. The introduction of an other-led vision of trauma recasts any potential for empathy, even if only tokenistic, as a vicarious experience that is safely presented from encroaching on reality: as both the stuff of imagination, and as a result of Remy's episodic experience of time. Where Remy fails to imagine a third-party, his descriptions are less sure-footed, shifting from the security and sense of definition in the future tense, to the conditional and past tenses, the latter of which is largely superfluous for a man without memory, and yet his disconnect from the scene remains steadfast.

Elsewhere in the text, in scenes where his imagination lacks a cast, Remy is still able to create distance between himself and the possibility of an empathic connection with the visual evidence of trauma. At the beginning of the novel, Remy recalls standing on the edge of the Zero,

> '[S]taring at the massive ribs, the shattered steel exoskeleton in pieces as far as he could see, smouldering bones draped with gray, like a thousand whales beached and bleached, rotting in open air, it was hard for Remy to **imagine** that they hadn't won.'[15]

In this scene, Remy's imagination is confined to the present moment, in the form of an imaginary projection superimposed over the devastation – those visual symptoms of trauma – at the Zero. Despite his ability to conjure a powerful image of beached, decomposing animals in the place of the steel leviathans at Ground Zero, Remy is unable to imagine that the scene before him is anything but a terrorist victory. That Remy is able

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[15] *The Zero*, p.19.

to jump from the trauma represented in present moment to vivid imagination, yet cannot bridge the same gap in response to something as abstract, and formless, as a terrorist victory is unlikely, and offers another hint at Remy's potential unreliability as narrative lens. The translated text seems to acknowledge this dissonance, but maintains an equal sense of disjuncture in Remy's imaginative inabilities yet resolute inability to recognise the links between his imagination and the present moment, consolidated by the awkward double-negative across both source and target texts. In translation, 'Remy avait du mal à **se convaincre** qu'ils n'avaient pas déjà gagné', that is, he struggled to convince himself that they hadn't already won. That Remy fails to convince himself of a point of view suggests there is some barrier in place that makes it impossible to take on an idea or concept as factually accurate, shifting questions surrounding Remy's imaginative capabilities and skills of representation onto the possibility for reflexivity, reflection or even a rationalised conceptualisation of events. In terms of cross-textual cohesion, both texts absolve Remy of the responsibility, and indeed the ability, to bridge the gap between action and consequence, restricting the implications of his continued paraliptical observations to the imaginative realm.

'Like some hole in a kid's nightmare': Testing genuine imaginative failings

Guterak, Remy's partner and closest friend, offers a significant point of contrast to Remy's empathic dislocation from the traumatic event. Guterak incessantly recounts, rehashes and reiterates his traumatic experiences, his obsessive approach to 'working through' his traumatic memories fitting with conventional frameworks for reliving trauma as a means of recovery. Yet Guterak, in his genuine engagement with the traumatic repercussions made manifest by the Zero, comes up against the very failure of imagination from which Remy claims to suffer:

> You'd be on a street, but all of sudden it wasn't a street any more…you take five steps and you're in some place you can't imagine, like some hole in a kid's nightmare. I couldn't believe the next morning, how gray it all was. That night it really seemed black to me.[16]

Guterak's testimony, punctuated by his inability to articulate his experiences, as well as his role in the text more generally, fits with the narratives of exceptionalism and victimhood that dominate post-9/11 discourses on the 'unknowable' nature of traumatic experience, and that are satirized throughout Walter's novel. The gap in Guterak's

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[16] *The Zero*, p.152.

memory is not an episodic break in consciousness, nor is it later filled with an imagined scenario that is contrary to the failure of imagination from which Remy professes to suffer. Instead, this 'hole in a kid's nightmare' is a void that is not only unthinkable, but unknowable, and therefore cannot be accommodated in Guterak's obsessive, and intensely personal, account of his traumatic experiences. Moreover, in this instance, Guterak tends to conflate the failure of his imagination, or more precisely his visual memory, with his inability to articulate the impact of his traumatic experiences objectively: a cognitive link between action and consequence that cuts his description short. Remy, in contrast, does not suffer this same lapse, and his imagined scenarios are able to describe with precision the moment of traumatic suffering and death that his empathic disconnection from the trauma facilitates.

Yet the translated text employs a series of three translation shifts to problematise what, in the original novel, is a clear-cut contrast between an overwrought Guterak and a passive, disengaged Remy.

> **On** était dans une rue, sauf que tout d'un coup, c'était plus une rue…Tu faisais quelques pas et tu te retrouvais dans un endroit **pas pensable**, une espèce de trou tout droit sorti du cauchemar d'un gamin. Le lendemain matin, j'arrivais pas à croire que tout était **devenu** gris. **C'était si noir cette nuit-là.**[17]

Firstly, Guterak's present-tense reliving is refigured in translation as an imperfect description: shifting from lived recollection to storytelling. While the original text sees Guterak suspended, if only momentarily, in the most resonant of his traumatic memories, the translation uses the imperfect tense to enact the temporal distance between the present-day Guterak and his former experiences. By teasing out the significance of this distance – which is not explored in the traumatic re-enactment of Guterak's reliving in the English text – it is possible to read the further shifts in the excerpt as a mirroring of this distance, whereby Guterak is more emotionally detached than his counterpart in the original novel. In another temporal shift, the French text introduces a sense of development and trajectory into his description through the use of 'devenu'. Guterak finds it hard to believe that 'tout était devenu gris' – that all had *become* grey – in another shift that suggests the character, though recounting traumatic experiences, is conscious of a decided temporal shift between one past state and another. In the original text, Guterak's disbelief is at the totality of the greyness, rather than the contrast with what

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[17] *Le Zéro,* p.154

came before, in a subtle shift that sees his suspension in a visual snapshot of the traumatic scene converted into linear, temporal terms. Furthermore, in the English excerpt, Guterak closes with his impressions of the scene, rendering the trauma in purely personal terms through the use of a first person pronoun: 'That night it really seemed black to **me**.' The use of 'seemed' here is also interesting, particularly when considered in contrast to the surety that characterises Remy's detached descriptions of, and attitude towards, past events. In the French text, Guterak's emotional investment in his memories no longer serves as the antithesis to the logical, disconnected Remy, but instead mirrors the protagonist's factual representations of otherwise individual and personal experiences. The uncertainty of the original text is lost in favour of a matter-of-fact description of the attacks: 'C'était si noir cette nuit-là.'

What is perhaps most striking in the translation of Guterak's traumatic memories is the emphasis on temporal distance and emotional dislocation that is otherwise limited to Remy's pragmatic treatment of past events. This distance results in a divergence in character from the Guterak of Walter's original text, and the vulnerability and volatility of Remy's partner is cast off in favour of a temporally and emotional detached version of events. As well as the absence of a personal pronoun in the final statement of the paragraph, the translated passage as a whole oscillates between two second-person pronouns – 'on' and 'tu' – that charts an immediate shift in Guterak's narrative from an impersonal to personal recollection of events. In contrast, translated excerpts from Remy's imagination recast the personal possibility of 'you' in English as third-person pronouns, enacting an empathic distance between Remy and the subjects of the trauma he envisages.

The contrast in this characterisation across the original and translated texts is all the more striking when considered alongside the shifts in Remy's treatment of trauma in memory. Guterak plays the role of consummate victim: taking part in commemorative events, touring celebrities around the Zero complete with his first-hand experience as pseud-audio guide, and acting as the poster boy for a new cereal brand, 'First Responder'. In the original text, Remy's partner not only incessantly attempts to articulate and describe his traumatic experience to anyone willing to listen, but in the extract above, relives it, thus bridging the temporal and emotional distance that Remy is unable to traverse, and inhabiting the traumatic terrain of his memories. Guterak's account of 'that night' near the hallmarks of traumatic experience: genuine lapses in imagination and

memory, a present tense 'reliving' of the events and a perspective guided by emotion and the immediate visual impact of the scene. In translation, Guterak is more objective: switching the impressionistic sense of the final statement to one of factual recounting, and is able to recognise the influence of causality and consequence on his perspective. In terms of the treatment of the visual and the imagination, as a terrain for vicariously experiencing trauma, Guterak comes closer to Remy's attitude to events in moving away from a conscientious engagement with imagining the events through a personal, subjective lens. In translation, Guterak's description shifts from 'some place you can't **imagine**' to 'un endroit **pas pensable**' – an unthinkable place – where visual conceptions of memory and trauma are replaced by a term that relate to cognition and logic: this 'unthinkable place' denying plausibility or comprehension, rather than the limits of one's imagination.

In *Le Zéro*, Remy and Guterak are much more closely aligned than in Walter's original text. As the potential for empathy is increased in the emphasis of an other-centric conceptualisation of visual trauma, Remy's emotional detachment is simultaneously assured. Similarly, in finding temporal and emotional objectivity in Guterak's perspective, the translation creates an empathic distance that means Guterak too moves towards a vicarious experience of his own trauma. However, this added cohesion in the target text does not necessarily result in the loss of the contrast that, in the original text, serves to emphasise Remy's dissociative and dysfunctional approach to trauma. Instead, it could be argued that this disengagement could itself be a symptom of trauma: that Remy is not wilfully, empathically absent, but that traumatic experience, in the context of American exceptionalism and the invasive effects of public narratives of grief on the private lives of victims, is dissociative and encourages a vicarious and voyeuristic approach to trauma.

Anchoring translation shifts with translation equivalence

Equivalence in translation has not been a priority for literary analysis elsewhere in this thesis, which has instead prioritised the value of considering translation shifts and narrative inconsistencies across the source and target text divide as a rich terrain for textual analysis. The assumption in literary translation is that examples of equivalence mark points of intersection between source and target texts, where a translation is considered accurate, and is therefore more likely to be considered valuable or of a 'good'

quality if it is able to replicate the original. The term 'equivalence', as it is used throughout this thesis, differs fundamentally from the functionalist concept outlined by translation scholar Eugene Nida. Nida's framework for equivalence remains prevalent in contemporary translation theory, informing the basis for domesticating strategies whereby 'the message of the original text not only can be determined, but also that it can be translated so that its reception will be the *same as that perceived by the original receptors*.'[18] More generally, Nida's work is entrenched in functionalist approaches to translation, that prioritise 'the purpose of the translation, the goals of the translator, the nature and needs of the audience, and the historical and social context': values that directly contrast with those outlined in this thesis. In these terms, equivalence is function-driven, and seeks to evaluate how far a translated text might perform the same function as its source-language counterpart, in terms of reader reception and contextual purpose.[19] Moreover, the methodological processes on which equivalence theory is built stand in stark contrast to the translation-oriented approach I seek to advocate in this thesis:

> Nida prefers to work backwards from the surface of the original text to its deep structure, transfer that deep structure to the deep structure of the new language, and then generate a surface structure in the second language. In other words, he posits a decoding and recoding process in which the original message never changes.[20]

From this perspective, the original text is understood to hold the key to its own translation, and to uphold the essential message, purpose and structural function that any translation thereof might seek to recreate. This process of decoding and recoding, with the view to unlocking an essential and equivalent message that is sustained across source and target text, is entirely at odds with a comparative analysis of translation shifts, which seeks to highlight the potential of translated texts as critical and creative tools for literary analysis. I would argue that even attempts to adapt Nida's evaluative approach to translation to comparative analyses of fiction fall short. Gutt attempts to rationalise equivalence theory as a conceptual model that 'is meaningful only [when it] spells out what aspects of the texts are to be compared and under what conditions equivalence is thought to pertain'.[21] This understanding of equivalence seems, at least superficially, to fit the form of genre-specific comparative analysis conducted in this thesis. However, what

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[18] Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2001), p.53.
[19] Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators,* (London: Routledge, 2014), p.34.
[20] Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories,* p.55.
[21] Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, (London: Routledge, 2014), p.10.

remains problematic in this approach to evaluative equivalence is the source-oriented analysis it enacts and upholds, as well as the contextually-bound, and reception-driven, conditions in which a given translation is assumed to function.

Equivalence, as I understand and use the term, describes translation shifts that use comparable linguistic, semantic and structural devices to create equivalent meaning. Crucially, this meaning is not reception-driven, nor related to any notion of how the reader might decipher or interpret meaning. Instead, the key criteria for determining this form of equivalence, or identifying what I have also called 'arbitrary shifts' in *The Zero*, is whether the source and target text differ in terms of their temporal positioning, empathic perspective, or textual cohesion. This is seen most clearly in the translation of the titles for each of the novel's three parts, where the heading 'Days After' is equivalently rendered in translation as 'Les jours qui suivent': where the explicitation and verbal phrasing of the translation secures an equivalent sense of ellipsis – 'Days After – *what?'* (qui suivent – *quoi?*) across both texts.[22] Similarly arbitrary is the shift in the title of part two, where the reflexive solution of 'Tout s'estompe' for the original title 'Everything Fades' is a result of linguistic rules that constrain the French language, particularly in subject-verb constructions.[23] Beyond these isolated examples, equivalent translation solutions have a role to play in deciphering the wider narrative repercussions of translation shifts. Elsewhere in this thesis I have argued for the importance of cumulative approaches to translation shifts: identifying calculated and interconnected shifts in narrative patterns, themes and characterisation, rather than viewing these linguistic, literary and structural shifts as isolated inconsistencies. If examples of translation equivalence then match these patterns in translation shifts, the suggestion is that shifts in translation are more likely to be reactive to underdeveloped or implicit themes and allusions in a source text, which are therefore also found at points where the novels overlap or mirror one another. Furthermore, this fits with my approach of parallel reading as a means of destabilising and dismantling the conventional analysis of translations as subordinate and derivative texts. Identifying translation shifts, before considering translation equivalence as supplementary evidence for the cohesive potential found in such deviations across source and target texts, favours the subversion of typical source-to-target reading of translation. This approach not only prioritises comparison but

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[22] *The Zero,* p.3; *Le Zéro*, p.13.
[23] *The Zero,* p.141; *Le Zéro*, p.143.

also implements a 'backwards reading' of the texts that destabilises equivalence as a baseline for translation analysis. In addition, the cohesive thematic elements across the texts, despite their different trajectories, illustrates the potential for moving away from the original text as a thematic blueprint or guide for interpreting the translated target text, and instead focusing on how shifts in translation might serve as examples of creation, as well as adaption, extrapolation and manipulation, that therefore suggests there is potential for identifying original content in translation that inform a reading of the original, rather than vice versa.

The argument for divergent source and target text narratives contributing to cohesive cross-textual themes may seem unlikely, given that the basis for this conclusion is based on what are essentially narrative inconsistences across the texts. However, the cohesive narratives of empathic disconnect in both texts is further bolstered by examples of translation equivalence which, rather than providing a baseline against which translation shifts might be compared, suggests that the translated text works to locate and manipulate thematic narratives that emphasise, rather than disrupt, narrative threads within the source text. In terms of failures in Remy's imagination, in these moments of parallelism and equivalence – where either vocabulary or sentence structure is rendered in equivalent terms – it is possible to locate anchor points, where the source and target texts hit upon a shared, cohesive moment in the narrative. However, rather than these points of equivalence offering isolated moments of cohesion amongst an array of translation shifts, I would argue that the cumulative reading of translation shifts that has been pursued in other chapters of this thesis can here be extended to include translation equivalence, whereby a sub-plot or narrative thread might be traced through both source and target text, with points of commonality adding to the cohesive potential of translation shifts.

> 'The Zero smelled even stronger down here, and **he couldn't help wondering** if, as they moved down, they weren't nearing some hot wet core of the thing – and he imagined a river of smell, perhaps guarded by a robed ferryman or a cabbie sitting on a beaded chair.'[24]

> 'L'odeur du Zéro était encore plus forte ici, et **il ne put s'empêcher de penser** qu'ils se rapprochaient de son noyau chaud et humide…Il s'imagina un fleuve de puanteur, probablement gardé par un passeur encapuchonné ou un chauffeur de taxi assis sur son trône.'[25]

In this scene, Remy makes a half-attempt at resisting delving into his imagination, but is

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[24] *The Zero,* p.87.
[25] *Le Zéro,* p.93.

unsuccessful, with the French translation of 'couldn't help wondering' employing the term 's'empecher' - to prevent oneself – to underline the possibility of Remy actively resisting a reimagining of the present moment. The reflexivity of this verb, as well as 's'imagina' later in the passage emphasises the implicit meaning present in the source text of these moments of imagination as internal, and therefore private, visualisation and pretend experiences. While these translations help to set the scene, and make explicit the subtext of the source text, these passages do not represent any true translation shifts.

What is particularly striking is that, aside from examples of translation equivalence, these scenes share another, more significant, common thread with Remy's wider failures of imagination: they are occupied, and therefore primarily experienced, by other people. Therefore, whether explicitly addressing Remy's belief in the failure of his imagination, or simply presenting an imagined scenario without protagonist intervention or caveats, Remy's narrative gaze is not relocated, and these passages remain other-centric. Using moments such as these as a baseline, against which Remy's failures might be compared, strengthens the case for a distinct lack of empathic unsettlement, both in terms of Remy's potential to inhabit the experience of another in empathic terms, and for a wider empathic shift across the translation divide. In short, although the translation emphasises the human experience of trauma as envisaged by Remy, these scenes do not represent empathic gestures. Instead, these scenes function as glimpses of 'virtual trauma' in its truest sense: alternative realities, much like those in Edgar's video games, where trauma is explored only as a visual scene, without impact, consequence or accountability.[26] Even Edgar, Remy's teenage son, recognises that the 'captive realities' of his online virtual realities are 'action-reaction oriented', in a way that Remy's imagination, and indeed his world, are not, untethering him from the responsibilities and reflection that typify the role of empathiser. Instead, the distance that Remy secures is not empathic, as no connection with those implicated in the traumatic scenes he imagines – whether sympathetic or tokenistic in its empathic approach – is ever forged, just as the link between Remy's imagination and his reality is never formed.

Ironically, the fact that these imaginings are not made public – in stark contrast to the cycle of obsessive over-sharing in which Guterak is trapped – does not preclude their privacy. Instead, it becomes clear over the course of the novel that the distance and

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[26] Dominik LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), p.125.

disjuncture that Remy consistently employs in imagining trauma as experienced by other people, suggests that even Remy's internal mechanisms – of temporality, of memory, or imagination – are subsumed to his public roles as victim and counter-terrorism agent.[27] From this perspective, Remy's imagination is not protected, private territory but a terrain for playing out possible scenarios that embody the very lack of accountability and empathy for which he has come to stand. Therefore, it could be argued that, as Remy is unable to find a moral measure by which he might distinguish between the internal and external lives and roles that he occupies, all that is private becomes public. From accidentally speaking aloud in various interactions across the novel, to buying new clothes and inventing a new persona with his girlfriend April, Remy's imagination does not offer a retreat from the real world, but instead offers the possibility of an action-reaction world that is experienced exclusively by others.

Occupying imagination: Virtual experience or vicarious witness?

The result of these other-centric imaginings is that an empathic reading of Remy's experiences is largely impossible and inappropriate. Not only does the fragmented narrative structure not allow for the introspection and reflection that empathy requires, but Remy's emotional and cognitive detachment – from the possible empathic links that could be forged between his humanised traumatic experience, though imagined – circumvents the need for any moral or empathic agency from a protagonist that, by all accounts, cannot be considered accountable for his actions. Translation shifts in imagination, though typically representative of narrative divergence across source and target texts, are ultimately markers of thematic cohesion. For example, though the translated text enacts an objective distance between Guterak and his traumatic memories that is not present in the original text, the result is an emphatic illustration of how vicarious experiences of trauma might extend to those previously upheld as victims of trauma by exceptionalist narratives. Indeed, the range of translation shifts that characterise Remy's 'failure' of imagination not only draw out and emphasise existing thematic and narrative threads in the text but also, in their creative additions, speak to wider discourses on the symptoms of trauma and exceptionalism: those over-arching

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[27] The term 'victim' refers to the degradation of Remy's vision and memory as results of trauma – whether his experience as a first-responder on September 11th, or due to his self-inflicted gunshot wound in the opening scene of the novel. That these physical conditions are conceptualised by other characters as consequences of Remy's traumatic experience, it can be argued that his public role of victim – as shaped and articulated by external forces – may be largely responsible for the lack of accountability attributed to Remy's actions.

narratives that encompass both text and translation.

Most significant of all is that a parallel reading of text and translation uncovers the potential for the imagination, whether failed or indulged, as a terrain for staging vicarious experiences of trauma. Remy's other-led treatment of trauma in translation serves two main purposes. First, trauma is witnessed as the suffering of others: safely ensconced in Remy's imagination and bolstered by an episodic and fragmented experience of time, imagined suffering is neither an empathic gesture nor a trigger for accountability on Remy's behalf. Second, once Remy is absolved of accountability or implication in this suffering, the traumatic experience of others is more secure – whether in temporal, pronominal or causal terms – and therefore emphasises the precariousness of the individual in traumatic memory and imagination. Whether framed as a failure of imagination, as the suffering of others, or as a traumatic memory from which the present tense is temporally and emotionally detached, a parallel reading of the novels suggests that vicarious experiences of trauma consistently masquerade as virtual forms of suffering. The 'captive realities' that both Remy and Guterak witness are symptomatic of a kind of post-traumatic voyeurism that, although explored via different means in translation, results in an emptying of empathy and added objectivity in both texts.[28] Just as Guterak admits:

> 'I envy people who watched it on TV. They got to see the whole thing…Sometimes, I think the people who watched it on TV saw more than we did. It's like, the further away you were from this thing, the more sense it made.'[29]

Whether the empathic distance enacted by the post-traumatic imagination can be understood as a symptom of traumatic experience in the shadow of wider discourses on exceptionalism and public grief remains to be seen, and yet the temptation to uncover the intent behind translation shifts and parallel analyses of text and translation is a potential red herring. What is more significant, and what has guided the critical analysis that this thesis adopts, is how far translation shifts might act as ciphers, and as a critical lens for uncovering narrative and thematic threads that would otherwise remain implicit, or unexplored, in the original text. Furthermore, this chapter also seeks to test how far the narrative device of an unreliable narrator as a compromised witness of trauma functions as a critical tool, particularly when text and translation might be considered as parallel

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[28] *The Zero,* p.119; *Le Zéro,* p.122.
[29] *The Zero*, p.85.

and alternate versions of the same work.

Translation shifts and empathic trajectories

While it is possible to conceptualise translation shifts as belonging to cumulative narrative shifts across source and target texts, or as markers of a coherent target-text narrative, created and modified in translation, there exists a third possibility of using translation shifts to trace empathic trajectories. These translation shifts illustrate how an initial instance of divergence across text and translation acts as a starting point from which a series of consequential shifts can be traced as a kind of narrative trajectory. What makes these shifts distinct from cumulative or thematic conceptualisations of translation divergence and difference is that, at least in the case of *The Zero*, these translation shifts are amplified in the target text, acting as an extrapolation, or perhaps a foreshadowing, of the trajectory of the source narrative. In this sense, the translation is one step ahead of the source text on a trajectory that directly influences and manipulates the empathic position and potential of the protagonist as narrative lens.

In a rare moment of explicit empathic engagement – where empathic potential is outwardly enacted by the protagonist, rather than imagined – Remy reflects on the thousands of posters of the 'missing' that paper the walls of the city. At one point in the narrative, Remy admits, if only to himself, that:

> '…**as a survivor**, **you** had to stop and look at the pictures because that was what was required of **you**. Of course, **these** weren't missing people **anymore**; **they** were dead people **now**.'[30]

In this moment, the source text capitalises on the opportunity to play with the object of the narrative's free indirect discourse. The ambiguity of the second-person pronoun oscillates between the possibility of an authorial monologue, directed at an implied reader, and Remy, whose voice has the potential to reach outwards, to another 'you', or to favour the impersonal function of the second person. This shift in voice from the third person narration to a moment of free indirect discourse is instrumental in maintaining the potential for empathy in the passage, while resisting its pull. If the passage were the maintain the same third person narration that precedes this excerpt, and that is characteristic of the narrative as a whole, the potential for empathy would be converted into a moment of self-identification as survivor, as well as a process of causality and

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[30] *The Zero*, p.72.

impulse derived from such an identity: 'As a survivor, *he* had to stop and look at the pictures because that was what was required of *him*.'

However, the translation depersonalises the source text, shifting from pronominal to nominal constructions:

'**Chaque survivant** avait **le devoir** de **s**'arrêter et de regarder ces images. **Il** ne s'agissait plus de disparus, mais de morts.'[31]

In addition to the deletion of pronouns in translation, the explicit and repeated reference to 'people', as well as the chronological record of time to which these portraits stand testament ('**these** weren't missing **people anymore**; **they** were dead **people now**'), are less emphatic than in the original text. These references are present in the translation, though to a lesser extent, through the use of 'ne…plus' and the plural nouns 'disparus' and 'morts' which refer to a group made up of distinct individuals, rather than a singular community. Moving away from the repetition and ambiguity presented by the source text pronouns, this passage illustrates an unusual example of implicitation from source to target, where the linguistic elements of the translated text are enough to be considered essentially equivalent to those in the English text, yet which lack the deictic and emphatic markers that overtly perform the meaning of the original phrase. It is challenging here to differentiate between the performative aspects of the language of the text, and the extent to which this performativity, or explicitation, is the result of reader interpretation. However, tracing this implicitation through the extended excerpt in this instance sheds light on how this process of reading for equivalent and linguistic sense is dependent on the trajectory that each text follows, originating from the moment of implicitation that marks a text-translation derivation.

From this instance of divergence, it is possible to trace the implicitation present in the translated narrative as a means of tracing translation shifts that consistently move away from the specificity and emphasis of the source text.

'…the walls made this quiet shift from **the missing to the dead**'[32]

'…les murs opéraient le délicat changement de **la disparition à la mort**'[33]

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[31] *Le Zéro*, p.79-80. Back translation: [Each survivor had the obligation of stopping and looking at these images. The subject was no longer the disappeared, but the dead.]

[32] *The Zero*, pp.72-3.

Both narratives move away from singular or personalised descriptions of the missing to nominal constructions that introduce (in the English text) and exceed (in translation) the existence of groups or communities of the missing and the dead. As an isolated shift, it is clear that the translated text is here shifted towards a depersonalised account of disappearance and death. Yet when considered as a cumulative shift – a translation shift that belongs to the same narrative trajectory as the previous example – it is possible to view the narratives as parallel narratives, where the narrative pursuit of interpersonal disconnect is a step ahead of that in the source text. In other words, both excerpts increasingly undermine and deny the empathic potential in the portraits, but the shift in the original text is less radical than the immediate nominalisation in translation, moving instead from identifying individual victims within groups, towards a singular, nominal description that retains some empathic potential: from 'missing people' and 'dead people', to 'the missing' and 'the dead'.

Cross-textual dissonance, between the multiplicity of these groups in the source texts, to their cohesion in translation, offers an insight into the baseline concepts of empathy around which each of the narratives is built at this point in the novels, as perceived by the protagonist-focalizer.[34] Therefore, these shifts not only influence the potential for empathy, but also contribute to characterisation and the empathic position from which the narrative is experienced and relayed. In the English text, the emphasis is on the multiplicity of the victims – 'There could be no single photograph of the missing'– and the sheer volume of portraits and posters of the victims: always appearing together and en masse, yet emphatic of the individual stories behind the veneer of 'the dead'. The reference to the portraits as visual representations of the missing is made explicit, as is the impossibility of a single image being able to capture the diversity and multiplicity of such a group. In contrast, the French text shifts away from visual representations of the dead, focusing instead on the sheer scale of human loss: 'Il ne pouvait y avoir de disparu

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[33] *Le Zéro*, pp.79-80

[34] Where focalization is taken to mean 'the position or quality of consciousness through which we 'see' events in the narrative.' For reference, this quotation continues: 'In British and North American criticism, the phrase point of view has been used for this concept, but point of view is more general and often includes the concept of voice. Focalization may be more polysyllabic, but it is more exact. Usually the narrator is our focalizer, but it is important to keep in mind that focalizing is not necessarily achieved through a single consistent narrative consciousness. Focalization can change, sometimes frequently, during the course of a narrative, and sometimes from sentence to sentence, as it can, for example, in free indirect style.' H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.233.

solitaire.'[35] The observation in French that 'it was not possible to have a solitary missing person' again belongs to a wider, cohesive narrative emphasising the singularity and nominalisation of 'the missing', while rejecting the emphasis on visual representations of multiplicity in favour of impersonal, generalising statements that reject the possible empathy found in recognising the inherent individuality and uniqueness in the plurality of the language of the source text.

In terms of empathy, the translation lacks the contrast set up in the original text by the shift from free indirect discourse, and the potential for empathic disconnect that the distanciation of the second person pronoun secures. The language itself performs these divergent empathic positions. The texts shift from flatness to 'uniformité': the first emphasising the rich potential for empathic connection that ultimately fails when presented with another visual, and therefore superficial, representation of trauma and loss, while the translation favours repetition, uniformity and the effacement of the individual to articulate impersonal conceptions of victimhood.[36] Moreover, without the initial instance of narrative and pronominal dissonance seen in the source passage, the translated text does not begin from a moment of discord, and so nominal and impersonal constructions, such as the factual statement that '**il** ne s'agissait plus de disparus, mais de morts' – compounded by the definitive use of an impersonal 'il' construction in French – are easily attributed to Remy's point of view.[37] The result is a distinctive shift in voice in the translation, that avoids the problematic, though ultimately productive, use of free indirect discourse in favour of nominal phrases and implicitation that empty the text of its explicit references to multiplicity and the subjective issue of visual representation. More significant still is how the translation favours impersonal, nominalised categories of death and disappearance in which the temporal shift from past-present-future, or living-missing-dead, is only implicitly performed by the linguistic elements of the translation. Ultimately, the result is a translated passage that swiftly empties the interaction between Remy and the posters of any empathic potential, relocating the protagonist – at least in terms of his role as narrative lens – into a position of greater empathic disconnect than his source text counterpart.

Just as Guterak offers an example of narrative respite, and a distinct narrative position

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[35] *Le Zéro*, p.79.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

from which Remy's failures of imagination might be externally framed, Remy's girlfriend April, and her reactions to the 'Portraits of Grief' in the aftermath of the attacks, provides a direct counterpoint to Remy's experience of the victim portraits. However, the most striking contrast in April's description of her reaction to the obituaries – her repeated and emphatic use of the first person – is not the most telling. April's narrative is rendered in equivalent terms in translation, where any translation shifts are distinctly arbitrary in nature:

> "**I** hate the way **I** read this page now," she said. "It's the same way **I** used to read the wedding announcements. When **I** first moved to the city **I** didn't know anyone and **I'd** read the wedding like someone trying to learn a language. **I'd** look for people I knew... Like an entire life could be captured in a paragraph."[38]

> « **Je** déteste l'effet que me fait cette rubrique, dit-elle. **Je** la lis comme s'il s'agissait de faire-part de mariage. **Je** ne connaissais personne quand **j'ai** débarqué à New York. **Je** lisais les faire-part pour apprendre le langage local, **je** cherchais des gens que **je** connaissais...Comme si une vie entière pouvait se résumer à un paragraphe.»[39]

Remy's perspective is rarely rendered in such personal terms, whether pronominally or in reference to subjectivity. The consistent self-referential language of April's speech is maintained in the translated text, and although the target text cuts down her lengthy description for the sake of brevity, the shift is arbitrary, as the meaning of the original is preserved and comparatively rendered. However, the key difference in April's engagement with the obituaries, and Remy's reflections of the portraits of 'missing' victims – both instances of loss represented or interpreted via visual means (and by external agents) – is that April's is expressed through dialogue. In contrast, the instances that reveal Remy's empathic disconnect, his failed imagination, or his experiences of temporal dissonance, are all internal reflections that are revealed by the narrative voice, not through interaction with another character. This is not to say that utterances may be considered more authentic than an internal narrative on events. Instead, the text could here be described as performing the empathic positioning of the character engaged in the empathic exchange: that is, April's self-referential, and therefore vicarious, and even tokenistic, experience of empathy described above is articulated as she herself engages empathically with an interlocutor. In contrast, Remy's empathic potential, whether implicating real or imagined others, is articulated internally: his insularity could itself be

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[38] *The Zero*, p.144.
[39] *Le Zéro*, p.146.

understood as the performance of, or even symptomatic of, his empathic disconnect. This hypothesis goes some way to explaining the lack of translation shifts, particularly in terms of empathy and character positioning (whether empathic, temporal, self-referential), in passages such as the one described above, and emphasises the significance of the translation shifts, as traced in this chapter, where the position of the potential empathiser *does* change.

Temporality

Yet Remy's perspective is hindered on two fronts: by the empathic limitations of his failure to imagine trauma, and by the fragmented, episodic temporality with which he views the world. What is particularly interesting in terms of the temporal fields of both texts is the oscillation of these (un)imaginings across past, present and future articulations of what it is to experience trauma. In a move that contradicts the typical forward-momentum of the hero narrative, these scenes attempt to counteract the gaps in Remy's memory with imagined jumps back in time, that test the limits of an imagination that Remy professes to be unable to access at all. In an effort to exert control over temporality where memory evades him, Remy's imaginings represent an alternative timeline, where extrapolations in either direction from the present offer the possibility of a new, non-linear construction of time. In other novels considered in this thesis, the translation of temporality focuses on how commemoration and aftermath might be articulated in terms of temporal distance, between the epicentre of the traumatic event and the residual effects experienced by both immediate and secondary victims. Yet *The Zero* does not experience this same ripple-effect version of time. Instead, in Walter's novel and its parallel translation, temporality acts as a stand-in for memory: not as the preservation of an authentic or lived event, but as a fallible record of past events that is susceptible to the pervasive influences of the public domain.

> Sometimes the gaps came like cuts in a movie, one on top of the other, with Remy struggling for breath; at other times he seemed to drift, or even to linger in moments that had ended for everyone else. Was there something he was supposed to take from such moments? Remy pulled the watch from its box bottom again and looked at its face, half expecting to see the second hand standing still, jittery and frozen, waiting for Remy to be jolted into the next moment. But the needle slid gracefully around the numbered face, **scratching away moment after moment after**…[40]

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[40] The Zero, p.96.

The most striking image in this extract is that of the contradictory movement of the second hand, at once sliding gracefully, yet 'scratching away' each moment across the face of the watch. The use of 'scratching' here alludes to a destructive image of time being slowly eroded, each moment erased with the relentless pace of time. Just as Remy's degenerating eyesight inhibits his ability to connect with the present moment as a visible (and visual) lived reality, so too is time itself steadily being erased, so that the protagonist impaired on two fronts – memory and sight – begging the question of what might fill the very gaps that these create. That each passing moment is erased, evading capture and the creation of memory, causes Remy to oscillate between the temporal states of past and present, unable to occupy either fully, leaving him 'half-expecting to see the second hand standing still'. In translation, Remy seems more adept at recognising the separation between these possible temporal states, again using his imagination as a tool for differentiation.

> Parfois, les trous de mémoire lui faisaient l'effet des coupes d'un film, elles s'enchainaient trop vite, sans que Remy puisse reprendre sa respiration. À d'autres moments, **il avait l'impression de dériver**, ou de se retarder dans des instants qui n'étaient plus habités par personne. Etait-il censé **de garder** quelque chose ? Remy ressortit la montre de sa moitié de boitier et observa son cadran, **imaginant** une trotteuse immobile, tressaillant, mais bloquée sur place, attendant qu'il soit propulsé dans l'instant suivant. Mais l'aiguille glissait gracieusement le long des chiffres du cadran, **égrenant chaque instant**…[41]

By distinguishing between the present moment and an imagined reality, Remy's episodic experience of time is revealed as nothing more than an impression: an attempt to piece together narrative temporality and progression that is ultimately discredited by the determined forward progress of the second hand. The use of 'égrenant' in translation marks a shift away from the wholly destructive image of the original text. Instead, the French verb 'égrener' – meaning to shuck or shell – creates an image of removing layers, of a repetitive shedding or removal of an external coating. Furthermore, the phrasal verb in the original text shifts to a transitive function in translation, further emphasising that this process happens to the seconds themselves, as if they were physical markers of an objective and linear conception of time that Remy struggles to capture.

Yet, the use of 'égrener' does not represent the possibility of exposing the essential nature of each moment, but is instead influenced by an additional meaning in French that diminishes the potential of this shucking as a means of reaching the kernel of

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[41] Le Zéro, p.101.

each moment. In French, 'égrener' is commonly collocated as the phrase 'égrener un chapelet '– 'to tell one's beads' – and refers to the repetitive and ritualistic motion of running ones fingers across the beads of a rosary. The reference is an ironic one, as there is no suggestion that Remy is religious, let alone a lapsed Catholic, and given Remy's complete empathic and moral detachment from any notion of guilt, accountability or atonement. Instead, the prevailing image is one of repetitive, cyclical action, and of a ritualistic process from which any sense of meaning or significance is absent. Remy asks himself what he should keep, 'garder', from these moments, and yet this shucking and shelling reveals them to be essentially hollow. That such salvage is impossible emphasises Remy's vulnerability to the forces of objective time as his ability to engage with, experience and memorise time is eroded. Instead, all that remains is a linear and essentially hollow record of time, from which the temporally-compromised Remy is unable to deduce any sense or meaning.

Echoes of this hollow process of repetition are present in both texts, contributing to a sustained narrative on the degeneration and degradation of time. The descriptive passages of both source and target texts tend to revolve around a series of ciphers: similes, metaphors and explicit literary devices that, when considered cumulatively across the translation divide, form a cohesive narrative discourse on wider insecurities with which the novel grapples.

> Remy stood on the curb outside his apartment and watched flakes come down from the sky, each one appearing lit from inside, each one **like an old secret**. It occurred to him that maybe this snowfall was occurring inside his eyes, and even as he quickly dismissed the idea, it seemed eerily plausible, that it could be snowing in his vitreous.[42]

That Remy likens the snowflakes to secrets is particularly significant, given the discourse on memory and accountability with which the novel is consistently engaged. Until this point, the unknown has been largely unobtainable: yawning gaps in Remy's memory that cannot be recovered but that equally grant Remy a huge margin of plausible deniability. However, this reference to an 'old secret' introduces a second strand to the unknowability of Remy's past actions – that they are, in essence, something to be deliberately concealed, and that these gaps could be wilfully deceptive, rather than innocently unknowable. This is not to say that Remy's reliability is called into question in such stark terms at this stage of the narrative. Instead, this scene illustrates the possibility of a recurrence of past events

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[42] *The Zero*, p.116.

and the multiplicity of memory, even if it is as fleeting as the snowflakes themselves and of the potential for exploiting the unknowable essence of the forgotten as somehow deceptive. Similarly, in the next sentence, Remy's ability to latch onto certain thoughts while dispelling others is revealed as a process that is essentially decision-based. He has the ability to recognise that the snowfall could actually be floating ocular tissue, but quickly dismisses the idea despite its plausibility, in a move that highlights his agency in the process of consolidating information as well as discarding thoughts as easily as the gaps in this memory form.

In translation, this reference to temporality is entirely absent, and the 'old secrets' of the original text become 'des secrets de glace':

> 'Il était sur le trottoir devant son appartement. Les flocons descendaient du ciel, éclairs de l'intérieure, comme **des secrets de glace**. Il s'imagina qu'il neigeait dans ses yeux, à l'intérieur de son corps vitre, ce qui lui sembla à la fois absurde et étrangement plausible.'[43]

The scene is cut down in the French text, the repetition of 'each one' deleted in favour of adjectival clauses, detracting from the multiplicity emphasised in the source text. However, in a compensatory move, the translated text introduces another thread of cohesion that enacts, rather than describes, this multiplicity. The parallels between the repetitive, identical beads of the rosary – of each second effaced and revealed to be as hollow as the last – and this image of snowfall is particularly striking, and contradicts the characteristic uniqueness that might be typically associated with snowflakes. Just as the shucking of the seconds revealed their hollowness, so too does the description of these 'secrets de glace' emphasise their unknowability, as well as their temporary nature: both of which ensure that they cannot be ascribed to any permanent, transparent record of time. The result is a sustained narrative of degeneration: of processes that repeat and replicate, and yet which resist chronology and linear configurations of time, thus further negating the possibility of the creation of memory.

This same scene moves on to question the extent to which a temporally-compromised, ever-degrading and therefore vulnerable perspective on reality might destabilise the limits between Remy's perception of reality and the visual terrain of his imagination. When Remy closes his eyes, he sees 'kind of captured reality: a black screen with snowflakes falling and streaking, like crawling beasts beneath a microscope lens.

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[43] *Le Zéro*, p.120.

Paper falling against blossoming darkness.'[44] In French, this glimpse of a captured, and therefore static, reality is all the more fleeting:

> 'Remy hésita. Lorsqu'il ferma les yeux, il **entrevit** une sorte de réalité captive: un écran noir avec des flocons de neige **fusant à toute vitesse vers le sol**, comme des bêtes rampantes sous l'œil d'un microscope. Du papier en chute libre sur fond de ténèbres florissantes.'[45]

In this moment, the realms of memory, temporality and imagination intersect: the incessant fall of snowflakes, whether meteorological or medical in nature, is glimpsed against a dark sky that itself is an echo of the novel's opening scene. In the original text, these 'old secrets' have the potential to serve as reminders of a past life, and even if revealed to be no more than the slow failure of Remy's eyesight, they at least provide evidence of a process of degeneration that is linear in its terminal and temporal progression. Yet the possibility remains that only Remy is able to see the snowflakes, that only he is witness to the shucking and shelling of time, and therefore that these visual records of time are fallible.

In both texts, the visible is consistently coveted as evidence for the authenticity of the traumatic event, and of the reality to which it stands testament. Guterak envies 'the people who watched it on TV [who] saw more than [he] did', suggesting that voyeurism, even in the post-traumatic realm, is considered more valuable, or more authentic, than empathically-charged experiences.[46] What the translation exploits and emphasises is how far the degeneration of subjective perception is bound up in the unravelling of the temporal. In light of the narrative cohesion in the translated text, temporal instability is made manifest and *visible*: the second hand of Remy's watch performs the ritual of scratching away time, but no visible record of time or chronology remains, just as his memory fails to serve as a testament to both his past actions and emotional states. Remy finds cryptic notes, written in his own handwriting, urging him not to hurt anyone, and yet these too, untethered from the evidential nature of memory and chronology, serve little purpose. Such passages, where visibility, temporality, and the realm of imagination (which bridges the two) intersect, are distinctly ironic. Characters crave the authentic and panoramic experience of voyeurism, and yet adopting a wholly voyeuristic and vicarious outlook renders them unable to engage empathically in the reality of traumatic experience

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[44] *The* Zero, p.119
[45] *Le Zéro,* p.122
[46] *The Zero*, p.85.

and its repercussions. The translated text serves to enhance this ironic reading of temporality and imagination, setting up ritualistic, chronological, or causality-driven narratives of time to stand in stark contrast to Remy's temporal impairment.

It is only in retrospect that the boundaries between the visual world of reality, and those of imagination and memory, can start to be untangled in this scene. Looking back from the novel's conclusion and Remy's excavation of his only memory of the day – of falling paper against a grey sky – it is possible to find echoes of this memory, and of the image of falling paper, throughout the text: a remnant of Remy's traumatic experience made starkly visual.[47] Yet Remy's consistent unreliability casts doubt over whether this image was innocently encountered throughout the novel, or whether he was, in part, conscious of this recurrent memory and therefore complicit in creating an artificial account of his impaired memory. Judging the extent to which the narrative integrity could be said to have been compromised by this unreliability will always be an individual endeavour, and one which is hard to justify as a purely textual and linguistic exercise. Instead, what is most compelling with this unreliability in mind, is how far each text foregrounds issues of credibility and authenticity as a kind of cipher for the compromised Remy, as well as raising questions surrounding how far this could be aligned with an overarching, novel-wide commentary on how far personal accounts of loss and trauma are susceptible to corruption and manipulation from external forces and players.

The case for translation shift as narrative cipher

While imposing a linear or progressive structure on Remy's experiences and memories opens up the possibility of accountability and culpability for the actions to which these events are tethered, this approach tackles only one aspect of the temporality with which both novel and translation are engaged. The episodic and fragmented nature of the narrative is not confined to the structure of the novel alone, but bleeds into the language of the texts, sculpting both the perspective of the protagonist and narrative focaliser and, in part, the world of the text as lived narrative experience. The possibility of this crossover between the fragmentation of the novel structure and the world of the text itself is explored in temporal terms, and particularly in translation, through the repeated use of the French verb 'éparpillé'. Used exclusively as a descriptive, past participle, 'éparpillé' is translated literally to mean scattered or strewn, and refers to a process that

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[47] *The Zero*, pp.8-9.

occurs 'au hasard', randomly, and without an intended pattern. Yet to be scattered, or 'éparpillé', is not an isolated event, and is best understood as a punctuation or a moment within a wider process that extends in both temporal directions. Both texts tackle this extrapolation of what it means for something to be scattered, yet to different extents, reaching back to the previous autonomy or homogeny that such a state implies, as well as forwards, considering the possibility of the reunification of disparate objects that once formed a whole. Crucially, the use of 'éparpillé' functions as both equivalent translation solution and veritable translation shift, and is used in conjunction with wider linguistic or narrative adaptations in translation, rather than appearing as an isolated lexical shift. Using 'éparpillé' as a marker of a wider narrative shift, it is possible to trace how the translation builds on subtextual references to temporality, but also how the target text introduces narrative cohesion and creates new moments of disparity between episodic and linear conceptualisations of time.

Of the intermittent uses of 'éparpillé' in the *Le Zéro*, there is a single example of translation equivalence that provides something of a baseline against which other, non-standard uses of 'éparpillé' might be compared.

> '…the massive ribs, the shattered steel exoskeleton **in pieces** as far as he could see, smouldering bones draped with gray, like a thousand whales beached and bleached, rotting in open air…'[48]

> '…les immenses côtes, cet exosquelette d'acier démembré, **éparpillé** aussi loin que portait le regard, et les os brulants drapés de gris, semblables à des milliers de baleines blanchies, échouées et pourrissant à l'air libre…'[49]

The excerpts above are taken from one of the most detailed descriptions of the Zero in both text and translation, and indicate a moment of source and target text alignment, where both capture the immense scale of the disaster zone. Both texts create an image of the destroyed towers as organic material: bones and ribs scattered, or 'éparpillé', as far as Remy can see. The translation matches the combination of past and present participles that typifies the description in the original text, and suggests that equivalence between the texts, and in the use of 'éparpillé', is possible within the given narrative frame and context.

That this equivalence is possible in the translation of Walter's novel suggests two

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[48] *The Zero*, p.19.
[49] *Le Zéro*, p.29.

possible readings of the repeated use of 'éparpillé' throughout the target text. Firstly, the term could serve as a general translation solution for more specific terms in English, and therefore functions as a catch-all term where equivalence is not possible. Secondly, and more likely from the perspective of this comparative analysis, this repetition is meaningful in constructing a narrative echo that, though derived from a parallelism with the original text, is only pursued in translation. The repetition of the term 'éparpillé' is not merely a superficial recurrence, as the implicit meaning of the word is maintained in each of its uses in translation. However, the following translation shifts are not instances of equivalence, and so in creating a narrative echo in the translation, the translated text introduces an implicit sense of cohesion and continuity that, if only in the repetition of this simple image, is not accessed in the original text.

> Brian Remy closed his eyes then and saw what he always saw: shreds of tissue, **threads of detachment and degeneration**, silent fireworks, the lining of his eyes splintering and sparking and flaking into the soup behind his eyes – **flashers and floaters that danced like scraps of paper blown into the world**.[50]

> Brian Remy ferma les yeux et les mêmes images s'affichèrent: des morceaux de tissue, **des filaments d'indifférence et de dégénérescence**, des feux d'artifice muets, la paroi de ses yeux se fendit en éclats, se détacha et s'écailla dans la soupe de son cranes…Et **les flashs et les corps flottants dansèrent comme des morceaux de papier éparpillés sur le monde**.[51]

The use of 'éparpillé' in this instance marks a decided shift from Remy's perspective in the original text of 'paper **blown into** the world'. The collocation between verb and preposition is somewhat jarring, creating the impression that these scraps of paper cross over some kind of threshold as they are forced 'into' the world. Such a movement across a threshold would also imply a division, between the rightful place for these 'flashers and floaters', and the world into which they are blown. The duality of the image is clear: the world behind Remy's eyelids, where these 'shreds of tissue' have no place, standing in for the dark skies above the Zero, where 'the birds, white – endless breeds and flocks of memos and menus and correspondence' are equally as invasive and incongruous.[52] In translation, the use of 'éparpillé' emphasises the reach of these 'morceaux de papier', and the extensive scale with which they are scattered across the earth. The resulting image is not as harmonious as its equivalent in the source text, and the implied collocation seems to be between the dancing scraps of paper and the implicit movement of their 'scattering'.

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[50] *The Zero*, p.9.
[51] *Le Zéro*, pp.18-19.
[52] *The Zero*, p.8.

In other words, when read side-by-side, the stress in each of the extracts is subtly different: the source text foregrounding the forceful entrance of the scraps of paper, and the target text underlining their scattering and reach.

Furthermore, the shift between 'blown into' and 'éparpillés sur' is not limited to the phrases themselves, but bolstered by an earlier translation shift in the passage. In the English passage, Remy recognises the flashers and floaters in his field of vision as 'threads of detachment and degeneration': physical evidence of the anatomical breakdown of his eyes. In this sense, the use of 'blown into' later in the passage could be seen to enact this detachment, and to extend the splintering and sloughing of his retinas as a physical symptom of a wider sense of increasing detachment between Remy and his experience of the present: the degradation of his connection with his memories, the linearity of time, even the repercussion of his actions. The French text is more creative in adapting this passage in translation, highlighting how comparing texts as parallel examples can be useful for tracing divergences back to the source text to uncover creative possibilities that are un (or under) explored in the source narrative. In translation, 'detachment' is not rendered in its physical sense, but alludes to emotional detachment or 'indifférence' which consequently impacts on the second adjective with which it is paired – 'dégénérescence' – which can in turn be understood both in reference to physical – or visible – degeneration, or invisible, emotion degradation. Therefore, rather than focusing on a factual and anatomical description of his failing eyesight, the French text offers a potential insight into Remy's emotional state, which in turn could account for the later shift in focus away from the divisive image of paper 'blown *into*' the world.

References to division, degradation and degeneration – in terms of the breakdown of a previous whole – are particularly pertinent when considering the use of éparpillé to mean 'scattered' or 'strewn': processes that implicitly require a previous state of integration or shared space from which they are dispersed. Also implicit in the use of 'éparpillé' is the possibility of reconstitution or reunion that such a dispersal might suggest, and the linear temporality with which such a process would need to align. Both these possibilities – of conceptualising this scattering as a linear process, and of the potential for reconstitution – are articulated in the translation shifts between both texts:

These things **were just…gone, he supposed**, liquidised into dust and endless tonnes of bits, indistinguishable pieces of rubble to be sifted in big construction-site shakers. Every so often he saw a truck head off to a series of big temporary buildings nearby, carrying loads of hastily stacked papers and organic material, **jigsawed bits of people**.[53]

Ces choses **avaient tout simplement…disparu**. Elles avaient été mixées en un incroyable amoncellement de débris indiscernables qui allait être passé au tamis dans les immenses shakers des chantiers de construction. De temps en temps, Remy apercevait un camion obliquant vers un groupe de gros bâtiments temporaires, transportant sa cargaison chaotique de papier et de matière organique, des bouts **de gens éparpillés**.[54]

The opening phrase of these excerpts chart two translation shifts, that see Remy's position – and his imposition upon the narrative voice – minimised in the translated text. The clearest measure of this shift is in the absence of Remy's narrative interjection, which serves as a kind of qualification of the preceding statement, in translation: 'he supposed' is not present in the French excerpt. Notable too is the shift from 'gone' to 'disparu', which marks a moment of cohesion in the translated text with the wider semantic field of vision and visibility that is indicative of Remy's narrative perspective in the target text. Yet this subtle shift in meaning is not limited to the individual words themselves, as the adjectival function of the phrase in English is rendered as a verbal phrase in translation. In French, 'disparu' functions as a past participle, and therefore as part the action of disappearance itself, rather than as a descriptive element. The imperfect tense emphasises disappearance as a sustained state, and one that suggests 'these things' were once visible, and that they have, and remain, disappeared. The cohesion between the tense of the auxiliary verb and past participle in French is not mirrored in the original text, where 'gone' is not used in a verbal sense, but performs an adjectival and descriptive function. In English, Remy observes that 'these things were just…gone', where the use of 'were' shifts the meaning towards description rather than action.

The descriptive focus of the original text is further secured by the gruesome image of 'jigsawed bits of people', that not only alludes to the violent act of the victims being torn into pieces, but also to the possibility (and by this I mean potential rather than a sense of hope that Remy actively cultivates) that these parts can be reconstituted into a whole. It is the second of these possibilities that the translation foregrounds with the use of 'éparpillé' to emphasise once more the disparate and dissonant nature of the post-9/11

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[53] *The Zero*, p.44.
[54] *Le Zéro*, p.53.

world that Remy encounters. The resulting shift suggests that the translated text not only foregrounds process rather than description, but also that Remy, as narrative filter, is more attuned to the processes by which present states have come to exist; an unlikely perspective for a point of view that is severely compromised in terms of chronology and therefore tethered, if only periodically, to the present moment.

In translation, the repeated use of the term 'éparpillé' creates and sculpts an image of dispersal, and of fragmented parts of a previous whole strewn across a geographical area from a former point of origin. Sheets of paper torn from complete, and therefore meaningful, documents, shards of metal from cohesive and stable structure, and body parts that once formed living, breathing people are pulled apart and 'éparpillé'. While the French term itself does not preclude the possibility of collecting these items and putting them back together again, the emphasis of their disparate locations in translation, and of the inherent wrongness that this dispersal represents, does. In the original text, the futility of this reconstitution, and the reversal of linear temporality that this would require, is not explored in the given extracts. Instead, the focus of the English text is on violence, and on the destructive forces enacted on these objects, rather than their subsequent dispersal as a form of degradation of the whole. The difference is a subtle one, but shifts the focus of the scenes from the visceral, physical descriptions of the source text to the disparity and dispersion foregrounded in the translated novel. However, this is not to say that the translated text finds hope in the possibility of restoration – and of the successful capture of the past, or at least of a previous state, that this process would entail – but that in translation, Remy is more likely to articulate their dissonance and difference than their destruction.

Remy's return to this image of scattered objects throughout the translated text – of parts of what was once a whole – foregrounds this dispersal in terms of geographical locations from a central point, and of physical disjuncture and degradation where there was once harmony. This scattering is symptomatic of Remy's wider perception of time and place, and indeed of the structure of the novel, as one that is itself 'éparpillé': a scattered and fragmented experience of time that belongs to a coherent whole, but where reconstitution is out of reach. Just as sheets of paper, body parts, and remnants of the towers are strewn across the Zero, so too is the landscape of the novel strewn with Remy's fragmented memories and moments of lucidity. Moreover, this parallelism could account for the repetitive use of the term 'éparpillé' in translation, and the episodic

working over that Remy goes through in an attempt to impose a narrative and chronological trajectory on this memories. Rather than a translation solution that generalises the specificity of the original text, the use of 'éparpillé' across a range of excerpts is significant as a means of creating textual cohesion, and of aligning the temporal insecurities of the protagonist with the wider temporal landscape of the novel as fragmented and episodic narrative.

Significant too is that the geographic focus of this scattering, that in other novels in this thesis is indicative of a deictic positioning of the traumatised narrator and trauma-space, is here part of a wider concern with degradation as a form of fragmentation, and of the pervasive effects of the dissolution of narrative subjectivity. Two of the uses of 'éparpillé' above are tied to an effacement of agency in translation, both of which allude to the degradation of Remy's vision. In the original text, Remy 'saw what he always saw' and describes the chaos of the Zero stretching 'as far as he could see'.[55] Crucially, the personal and perceptive aspects of these phrases are only made clear in translation, that is, in stark contrast to their absence in translation. In the French text, 'les mêmes images s'affichèrent' and the destruction that Remy witnesses is no longer framed as a subjective observation, but a detached and objective scene that stretches 'aussi loin que portait le regard'.[56] Therefore, although 'éparpillé' has a geographical connotation in both of these examples, its meaning is much more heavily influenced by the cohesive narratives on perception and degradation to which it has consistently contributed. What is particularly interesting is that this loss of agency relates to sight: to a compromised form of perception that itself acts as a cipher for the effacement of subjectivity and the self, and of the breakdown of linear structures of thought, of memory and consequence – rather than their absence.

The use of 'éparpillé' in translation functions as more than a convenient translation solution, and creates and alludes to a form of textual cohesion that is beyond the reach of even cumulative shifts from source to target text. Instead, 'éparpillé' not only responds to the narrative of degeneration and dispersal at the heart of the original text, but simultaneously creates an innovative strand of narrative cohesion within the translated text as autonomous novel. This dual function therefore suggests that translation equivalence and fidelity are not polarised by creative and innovative processes in

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[55] *The Zero,* p.9.
[56] *Le* Zéro, p.29.

translation, and that by shifting analytical readings of text and translation away from source text-oriented approaches, it is possible to read texts and translations as parallel, symbiotic texts. 'Éparpillé' is not a simple shift, but a cipher of how this parallel reading might operate, and how a translated text might offer a critical lens or tool for interpreting and uncovering textual elements in a source text that have previously been read as narrative or translational inconsistences.

<u>Cause and effect, action and reaction</u>

Insecurities surrounding linearity, and the drive of the protagonist to impose either chronological or relational structures on traumatic experiences and memory, are part of a wider concern in the translated text with the complex nature of cause and effect. The extent to which French translations of 9/11 novels tend to favour a linear and progressive narrative structure has been documented elsewhere in this thesis, and may be summarised as an overall tendency to introduce elements of temporal and descriptive cohesion that highlights relationships between potential causes and effects that, in the original texts, are less pronounced. In *The Zéro*, the shift from source to target text is much more transparent, and is succinctly captured in a single translation shift that, when considered in light of the consistent use of 'éparpillé', represents more than an arbitrary translation solution.

> '"It's not a video game," He looked up at Remy. "It's called Empire. It's a communal computer experience…like an alternate world. It's character-driven and action-reaction oriented. Just like the real world." Yes, Remy thought, **the real world is action-reaction oriented**. He needed to remember that.'[57]

In another of the novel's 'captive realities', the fragmented chronology and accountability of Remy's world is brought under scrutiny by Edgar's understanding of both virtual and real experiences as those oriented by 'character-driven action-reaction'. The ironic tone of this sentiment is clear: while the novel, as a literary device, is plot and character driven, the world it describes, at least through the compromised perspective of the protagonist, is not. The rules of this imagined world prove instructive for Remy, whose 'gaps' seemingly create an airtight form of plausible deniability, where the loss of a chronological or causal thread to his actions removes the possibility of accountability. However, what is interesting here is that Remy does not use this example of a virtual world to reassign responsibility to his actions. Instead, he reconfigures his experience as one of actions and

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[57] *Le* Zéro, p.30.

reactions, with no guide as to which of these occurs first in each of his episodic experiences. In other words, Remy does not entertain the possibility that the actions of others are responses to his own. Instead, his moments of clarity and sentience are as the movements of a Newton's cradle, where the origin of the momentum cannot be identified once the process has begun.

In contrast, the translated novel does not absolve Remy's world view of responsibility and accountability in the same terms:

> « C'est pas un jeu vidéo », dit-il en tournant la tête vers Remy. « Ça s'appelle Empire. C'est une expérience informatique communautaire…une sorte de monde parallèle. C'est axé sur les personnages, leurs actions et leurs conséquences. Exactement comme dans le monde réel.» C'est tout à fait juste, pensa Remy. **Dans le monde, chaque action a des conséquences**. Il fallait qu'il s'en souvienne.[58]

The world described by Remy's son in the French text is not one of simple actions and reactions, but one of actions and *consequences*: points of origin to which subsequent events, responses and thoughts can be attributed. Remy's repetition of this statement, independent of his own thoughts, – 'chaque action a des conséquences' – suggests an affirmation of its truth, or at least of its resonance with Remy himself. Moreover, the addition of 'chaque' or 'each' here suggests Remy is able to assign a sense of specificity, and perhaps accountability, to his experiences: he is not talking generally about actions and consequences here, but concedes that *each* action has consequences, and that cause and effect is therefore a pervasive, and far-reaching, process. Now again, ironically, although Remy acknowledges this connection between actions and their effects on page 39 of the novel, there is little evidence of this conceptualisation of the world taking root in Remy's psyche over the course of the novel, as his actions move further and further away from any form of accountability. The question once again is whether Remy's forgetting, if genuine, absolves him of responsibility and if, as a direct result of his inability (or refusal) to acknowledge the links between actions and consequences, Remy comes to embody the spectre of exceptionalism that has typified a significant proportion of American responses to the trauma of September 11th.

Conclusion

The value and innovation of a comparative approach to text and translation is seen most clearly in the overarching cohesive narratives in *The Zero* and *Le Zéro* that originate

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[58] *Le Zéro*, p.39

from translation shifts, variations and ciphers. By considering the texts as parallel, even symbiotic works, it is possible to trace stylistic and syntactic shifts – in the use of free indirect discourse, in paralipsis, and in pronominal positioning – and attribute these changes to wider cumulative and cohesive narratives. As such, what may previously have been considered inconsistencies, mistranslations or reduced to examples of domestication and foreignisation can, in these texts, be seen as innovative and cohesive cross–, and intra–textual references. From stylistic and linguistic shifts it is possible to recognise parallel narratives – on memory, temporality, imagination – which in turn, and particularly when mirrored or adapted in translation, speak to wider discourses on the fallibility and failures of subjective testimony in the face of public, yet unrelentingly exceptionalist, trauma.

Yet where there is cohesion, there is also cross-textual dissonance, and translation shifts in these texts work in divergent, as well as compatible, directions. Pronominal shifts, impersonal constructions and empathic place-holders all divert agency away from the protagonist in moments of potential empathic connection or interaction. Where the original text is steadfastly singular in its perspective, the translation foregrounds plurality and the multiplicity of memory. The addition of ritualistic, yet ultimately hollow attempts to record time in the translated text emphasise the failure of subjective testimony in a novel that, in English, privileges visual and visible evidence as a reiteration of fallible subjectivity. This critical analysis has illustrated how divergent trajectories and translation shifts function alongside productive examples of equivalence: shared anchor points across text and translation that ensure their conclusions are ultimately the same.

Ultimately, this critical discussion not only represents a culmination of the stylistic and critical potential for comparative translation approaches, but also illustrates how the translation of 9/11 fiction itself enacts many of the insecurities with which American novelists grapple. *The Zero* is driven by the problematic status of voyeurism, simulated trauma and authenticity: concepts that the translation process – with its shifts, dissonance, and ciphers – not only illustrates, but performs. This is what makes *The Zero* an ideal candidate for comparative study: the plot deconstructs and implicitly challenges the narratives of exceptionalism and victimhood upheld in other 9/11 novels, in favour of an ironic, yet productive, treatment of impaired empathy, unreliability and selfishness as facets of traumatic experience. Yet perhaps most fitting of all is that, despite the richness and nuance that a comparative translation-centric approach offers to conventional

readings of *The Zero*, comparison enhances, rather than combats, the staggering superficiality, voyeurism and empathic negligence that Walter finds in the exceptionalism of the post-9/11 era.

Empathy and Translation in the 'Ruins of the Future'

Beginning with the comparative analysis of translation shifts with the aim of repositioning source and target texts as parallel and reciprocal literary works, this thesis has developed into a complex and wide-reaching study of translation and 9/11 fiction as fundamentally empathic endeavours. At its core, this thesis is a study of literary texts: of the intricacies and subtleties of fiction, and of how the fundamental building blocks of empathic experience are vulnerable to shifts and unsettlement in translation. Yet although focused on illustrating the strengths of a comparative study of text and translation as an innovative and critical lens on contemporary fiction, the implications of this study touch upon such distinct fields as 9/11 literary studies, empathy and empathic unsettlement, and literary translation theory. In mapping the complex empathic connections between texts and translations, this thesis has uncovered untapped thematic links across the genre of 9/11 fiction itself, and taken the first strides into an innovative methodological approach for the comparative study of contemporary fiction in translation. This conclusion will map the trajectory of this thesis in clear detail, clarifying the contributions it makes to 9/11 fiction, comparative translation approaches, and to the empathic mapping of contemporary literary works and translated novels. More broadly, it will consider how far this study maps new literary terrains within the genre of 9/11 fiction and how translation shifts – as an innovative and promising field for future work – may provide the key to destabilising and subverting dominant translation approaches.

Empathic unsettlement, translation and the destabilised terrain of 9/11 fiction

This thesis has developed as a close reading of unsettlement that maps the trajectories of empathic gestures and encounters both within and across texts and their translations. Not only capturing how empathic encounters disturb and destabilise the deictic structures on which source and target texts are founded, the term 'unsettlement' deftly articulates the impact of translation of textual identities: some relocated to new, fledgling positions in the target text, others let adrift in the complex networks exposed in translation while a handful remain steadfast, though not untouched, by empathic encounters. Moreover, 'unsettlement' defines the empathic potential of the process of translation itself, as the performance of the same traumatic dissonance and dislocation felt in the creation of 9/11 literature. In this sense, the disarming potential of translation is

recast as a productive means of disturbance and unsettlement, resisting reception-led concepts of translatorship and reductive strategy-led discussions of the translation process as one of transfer, explicitation or adaptation. The results are a rich and insightful form of literary analysis that exposes the mechanisms on which literary empathy – whether within or across texts – is built. This comparative form of analysis rejects the source text as a blueprint for translation, and instead begins with texts and translations as reciprocal works of fiction: a symbiotic relationship from which translation shifts – as evidence for the empathic structures, networks and interactions of source and target texts – are uncovered. The basis of any subsequent literary analysis is therefore intrinsically comparative and empathic in nature, aligning the process of analysis with its subject matter. As a result, this analysis has rejected translation strategies that reduce the translation process to a series of tactical moves and balanced forces, such as the concepts of compensation and dynamic equivalence, and has critically analysed and re-defined any terminology derived from one-directional models for translation, including conventional interpretations of explicitation.

Reframing translation as a fundamentally empathic process of unsettlement offers a unique opportunity to challenge and translation theories that, when founded on binary constructions of source and target texts, are increasingly ill-equipped to tackle contemporary genres of literature. A growing investment in 'translator studies' has seen the agency of the translator – as a vehicle of sociological, cultural and linguistic forces that are largely beyond the scope of the literary text – consolidated as a prevalent methodological concept. Subsequent studies both undermine the textuality of the literary text as a rich terrain for analysis, and reduce the study of literary translation to the recovery of set of inscrutable translator intentions and characteristics that the translated text seemingly unlocks. Any interactivity between text and translation is orchestrated by the translator, and both texts function as stages upon which translatorial intentions, motivations, and unsolicited cultural bias are played out. Fuelled in part by a discipline-wide insecurity surrounding the status of the translator as creative agent, concepts of translator agency are largely untenable with the study of empathy, textuality and reciprocity that this comparative analysis has secured. Moreover, when empathically mapping texts and translations, it becomes increasingly problematic to account for exterior authors and translators as empathically-engaged agents, where extrapolating from

the texts to the agents of their creation does little to enhance the richness of a comparative textual analysis.

Establishing texts and translations as empathic terrains has proved particularly useful in articulating the limits of empathic experience and the challenges the translated text faces as a literary form of appropriation and virtual traumatic experience. It is particularly difficult to categorise the translated texts in this thesis: each problematises and, in several cases, expands the empathic capabilities of its characters, and engages with discourses on the function of fiction writing and translation as a form of empathic engagement and appropriation in unique ways. For example, just as *Un Concours de Circonstances* appropriates the matrix of eligibility and legitimacy into competitive, binary constructions of identity, the very process of translation engages with questions of how far the creation of these potentially oppositional identities might constitute a productive endeavour in the post-9/11 realm. Furthermore, the very creation of a translated text actively engages with the issues of commemoration and temporal dilation with which *The Submission* grapples. Just as the fictional memorial in the text functions as a physical artefact of trauma, and as a form of memory and testimony that is susceptible to empathic interference, so too does the translated text function as an artefact that consciously dilates and extends the temporal field of aftermath. While this could be interpreted as a form of dilation that sees the trauma cross into external cultural and linguistic fields, I am more concerned with how the translated text might function as a literary artefact that responds to other versions of literary extension and dilation, in an interaction that reveals the potential for literary engagement with the traumatic event. Similarly, just as a comparative analysis of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* creates a comparative set of axes of transcendental difference and proximity drawn equally from both texts, the very process of mapping comparable content underlines the potential for empathic structures and definitions to influence translation analyses directly. In this sense, translation shifts contribute to a kind of feedback loop, where the content of the source and target texts are aligned with the theoretical frameworks that drive their comparative analysis, together with the overarching ethos for the study of such texts as reciprocal and communicative works of fiction. This thesis has consistently advocated the need for such interactivity between literary content, textual analysis and translation comparison: an approach that is crucial if literary translation is to function as a viable tool for literary

analysis, rather than a selective and prescriptive instrumentalisation of a literary work for reception and dissemination.

Mapping empathy

Empathic maps and axes of empathic distance and proximity provide a means of articulating how texts and translations operate as centrifugal works that move away from a shared traumatic centre. Recognising a common traumatic point of origin, that bleeds into the works as a destabilising deictic and empathic force, allows a comparative literary analysis to resist notions of differentiation and compensation and instead consider how texts and translations function and interact as traumatic projections. To extend the vocabulary of cartography further, 9/11 novels and their translations function as different maps of the same traumatic terrain and, if directly compared, indicate moments of topographical and deictic overlap as well as dissonance and difference, as evidenced by translation shifts. While some shifts capture isolated moments of difference, others contribute to a wider cumulative shift in narrative cohesion or perspective. Crucially, no translation shift is framed as a narrative inconsistency or disparity, as there is no absolute, original work against which the translation is measured. In this sense, the creation of empathic maps or axes cannot be appropriated into a wider translation strategy or analytical framework. Instead, emerging from close readings of translation shifts, these topographical maps of empathy articulate the complex, deictic interactions of source and target texts across the translation divide, as constructed and navigated in proximity to a shared traumatic centre.

Although in their infancy as a form of comparative literary analysis, empathic maps have proved an invaluable tool in revealing how source and target texts interact on an integral, structural level. However, the terminology used in describing these topographical overviews of empathic interactions and networks – maps, deictic positions, traumatic terrains – could easily be misconstrued as a systematic means of categorising text-translation interaction, and therefore extrapolated for the analysis of further texts. Yet it cannot be assumed that the interaction between a text and translation will always yield comparative textual shifts in empathy that embody and perform the empathic status and positioning of source and target texts themselves. While 9/11 fiction exhibits many of the necessary characteristics for a successful empathy-led analysis of text and translation – particularly in the multiplicity of empathic perspectives and positions alongside physical

and temporal manifestations of the traumatic event – fictionalising and translating 9/11 does not ensure a work's empathic potential. Equally, the comparative analysis of a translated text – as a second, topographical representation of empathy – does not always clarify and develop the empathic structures of the original text, but may instead shed light on the often elusive concept of empathy itself in literary explorations of trauma. Across *The Zero* and *Le Zéro*, it is possible to trace how the texts explicitly enact and problematise otherwise abstracted concerns surrounding the authenticity of empathic intent and connection where an unreliable, and empathically-inhibited narrator, is present. In the French text, Remy imagines the suffering of collective groups that are formed of identifiable and distinct individuals, where the translation fosters the potential for empathic engagement on Remy's behalf with the traumatic experience of others. However, the original text uses an impersonal second-person pronoun (you) as an empathic placeholder, so that neither Remy, nor a defined other, are implicated as empathic agents or instigators in the imagined interaction. In isolation, the use of 'you' in the source text could be easily misconstrued as a thinly-veiled self-referential pronoun, where Remy sidesteps the empathic implications of describing a first-person experience of trauma. Equally, without a reciprocal text for comparison, the concrete identities of the translated text suggest that Remy is sensitive to the individual experiences of trauma within collective forms of suffering. It is only through a comparative analysis of pronominal language that a true representation of Remy's defective form of empathy – whether wilful or not – is revealed. In this case, a bi-directional reading of text and translation is necessary to expose the nuanced construction of empathy in 9/11 literature, as well as the potential for the translation process to intervene, problematise and mimic the process of empathic unsettlement on which each text hinges.

At the translational borders of empathic maps

Joseph O'Neill's 2008 novel *Netherland* (and French translation of the same name) provides the most significant illustration of how an empathic comparison of text and translation fails in instances where empathic potential is not articulated textually. *Netherland* bears all the hallmarks of an empathic exploration of the post-9/11 terrain: a retrospective account of a transatlantic, marital estrangement, viewed through the lens of Dutchman Hans' experiences of multiculturalism and the post-traumatic city as a member of the Staten Island Cricket Club. However, an analysis of text and translation revealed no significant translation shifts related to the empathic lines of enquiry already established in

existing chapters, nor any cohesive shifts that were distinct from other novels and translations in this thesis. This is all the more surprising considering Sarah L. Wasserman's insightful analysis of the 'optics' of the text and what she describes as its successful investment in, and productive manipulation of, the visual realm, in contrast to the prevailing media images of the event as a form of 'enduring visual archive.'[1] For Wasserman, the novel 'lays out a new mode of seeing, one that prizes distance over intimacy, mutability over memory, and the transnational over the national…[which] deterritorialize[s] the attacks and ask[s] readers to linger in a complex narrative of sustained departure.'[2] However, unlike novels and translations considered in this thesis, Netherland's investment in the visual is not bound up in discourses on the authenticity of individual perception, nor on the the limits of sight of one's imagination or perspective. Rather than serving to gauge empathic reach or potential, the visual spectrum of *Netherland* favours nostalgia and a roving, transient gaze that moves beyond the confines of the city, and of the nation, as traumatic centres.

I go to Google Maps. It is preset to a satellite image of Europe. I rocket westward, over the dark blue ocean, to America. There is Long Island. In plummeting I overshoot and for the first time in years find myself in Manhattan. It is, necessarily, a bright clear day… I am contending with a variety of reactions, and consequently with a single brush on the touchpad **I flee upward in the the atmosphere and at once have in my sights the physical planet, submarine wrinkles and all - have the option, if so moved, to go anywhere. From up here, though, a human's movement is a barely intelligible thing. Where would he move to, and for what? There is no sign of nations, no sense of the work of man. The USA as such is nowhere to be seen.**[3]

Je vais sur Google Earth. C'est préréglé sur une image satellite de l'Europe. Je file vers l'ouest, au-dessus de l'océan d'un bleu sombre, jusqu'à l'Amérique. Voilà Long Island. Je plonge en piqué, je vais trop loin et, pour la première fois, me retrouve à Manhattan. C'est, forcément, une belle et claire journée...Je lutte contre toute une série de réactions et, du coup, en un glissement de la souris tactile **je m'envole dans l'atmosphère et j'ai immédiatement en vue la planète, avec ses rides sous-marines et tout - j'ai la possibilité, si ça me chante, d'aller où je veux. De là, cela dit, le mouvement d'un humain est chose à peine intelligible. Où aller, et pour quoi faire? Il n'y a aucun signe des nations, aucune trace du travail de l'homme. Les États-Unis, en tant que tels, sont introuvables.**[4]

Google Earth provides an archived vision of space that almost verifies or vindicates the temporal suspension required for Hans' nostalgia: a conceptualisation of

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[1] Sarah L. Wasserman, 'Looking Away from 9/11: The Optics of Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*', *Contemporary Liteature*, 55.2 (2014), 249-269, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cli.2014.0017>, (p.251).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Joseph O'Neill, *Netherland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), pp.243-244.
[4] Joseph O'Neill, *Netherland*, trans. by Anne Wicke (Paris: Editions de l'Olivier, 2009), pp.292-293.

time that is explicitly linked to topographical representations of place. This individual nostalgia is, in turn, connected to wider visual narratives of 9/11, captured in the 'necessarily' (forcément) blue skies over Manhattan (O'Neill's nod to the enduring image of New York's cloudless September sky in 9/11 fiction).[5] Yet nostalgia, as a form of narrative filter, introduces the possibility of an unreliable, sentimental first-person narrator, mitigating otherwise heavy-handed and trite references to generalised commentaries on 9/11. However, despite explicitly engaging with post-traumatic conceptualisations of temporality, authenticity and memory, the previous parallel passages show no evidence of translation shifts. Across text and translation, deictic references are maintained, no external empathic influence is present in either narrative and sentence structure and tense are consistent: *Netherland* and its translation are resolutely equivalent where one would expect to find vulnerabilities in their construction via translation shifts.

Although both *Netherland* and its translation feature the same narrative devices and subjects found in other texts in this study, the distinct lack of empathic engagement in the construction of the text, and from the first-person narrator as a potential empathic position within the narrative, is a major contributor to the failure of a translation shift analysis in this instance. Critics such as Wasserman have been emphatic in uncovering the novel's commitment to extraterritoriality, border crossing and a transnational experience of post-9/11 New York: an outward gaze that is in direct contrast to the insular narratives that typify the novels considered in this thesis. Indeed, the central tenet of Rothberg's argument was not the process of mapping of 9/11 texts, but his belief in the need for 9/11 novels to 'imagine how US citizenship looks and feels beyond the

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[5] The image of a cloudless blue sky – indicative of that over Manhattan on the morning of September 11th – has become a familiar trope in representations of 9/11, including literary works. Kristiaan Versluy's book, *Out of the Blue*, is an explicit nod to the image, and several novels use the image on their covers, including editions of *Falling Man*, Frédéric Beigbeider's *Windows on the World*, and Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children*. Even *Netherland* (Vintage Contemporaries edition) was prefaced with the cover of a bright, overwhelming a miniature Manhattan skyline across the bottom edge of the dust jacket. Aaron DeRosa is clear on the problematic narrative of exceptionalism that such an image proliferates, asking, 'how does one successfully engage the other—namely the "radical," "fundamentalist," "terrorist" other—if the subject position from which one operates invokes, from the start, the perception of American/Western innocence depicted in a cloudless blue sky?' (pp.157-8). In *Netherland*, Han's naïve brand of nostalgia allows both subjective and external gazes on the image to co-exist: his memory conjures the rose-tinted, perfect Autumn day, while (perhaps unwittingly) acknowledging how far his own ability to remember the day is conflated with dominant, public and visual narratives on the attacks. In this case, O'Neill achieves an oscillation in narrative gaze – at once nostalgic and bitingly critical and self-aware – that the empathically-invested texts in this thesis cannot secure in their own representations of the skies over New York City.

boundaries of the nation-state, both for Americans and others.'[6] In both cases, the consensus is that the post-traumatic terrain cannot be mapped, and therefore cannot be understood, from inside its own borders (although these borders are problematically simplified to those of the nation-state). However, this study finds an alternative to the transgressive border-crossing of Rothberg's model in the permeable boundaries between text and translation, and the interactivity and reciprocity of empathic exchange. A comparative translation analysis is not just a means of standing on the outside of 9/11 texts looking in, but a way of mapping empathic connections and interactions across a post-traumatic terrain that is inherently textual and not bound by notions of context or difference. It is therefore entirely possible that the unsuitability of an empathic and comparative analysis of *Netherland* stems from this desire for expansion beyond the limits of the temporally and geographically-contained event, which destabilises the network of deictic structures and relative positions on which empathic interaction are built. Yet such terrains need a point of origin – a discernible landmark from which they might be extrapolated, and by which they might be compared – and , in the case of 9/11 fiction and translation, it is the traumatic event to which all empathic interactions and unsettlements can be traced.

Mapping empathy, positioning trauma

This comparative analysis has deliberately worked with the concept of the traumatic event without explicitly drawing on trauma theory: a framework to which this thesis was never designed to contribute. This is in part due to the desire to utilise a comparative study of translation shifts as a means of establishing a distinct critical vocabulary that is not dependent on the language of trauma theory, nor indeed of translation theory. There is much traction to be gained in applying concepts of 'working through' to 9/11 fiction writing: the phenomenon is well-documented and owes much to trauma-led analyses of 9/11 as visual event and archive.[7] However, for this comparative

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[6] Michael Rothberg, 'A Failure of the Imagination: Diagnosing the Post-9/11 Novel: A Response to Richard Gray', *American Literary History* 21.1 (2009), pp.152-158 (p.158).

[7] The majority of these readings focus on readings of *Falling Man* as a novel engaged with 'working through' the aesthetics of trauma, and the compulsive return to the traumatic image. Most often, *Falling Man* is understood as the narration of terror and an engagement with external frames for the event, including; the challenges of historicizing trauma and the suspended state of traumatic experience (Mauro); the resonance of the traumatic image, where 'one arrested moment stands in metonymically for the whole horror' (Kauffmann, p.647); and wider political narratives on terrorism, espionage and capitalism (Conte). More generally, trauma-led approaches to 9/11, which draw on the work of Dori Laub and Cathy Caruth, are best articulated in Nancy K. Miller's work on the 9/11 'Portraits of Grief', David Simpson's *9/11: The*

literary study, that the September 11th attacks can be defined as 'traumatic' is sufficient, as it is the textual manifestations of the repercussions of trauma that provide the most fertile ground for comparison across texts and translations. Engaging with theoretical concepts of 'working through', trauma is inherently bound up in notions of agency, audience and reception, and given that the field is largely founded on Holocaust testimony and representation (literary and other), 9/11 fiction could be easily absorbed into established discourses on the visual documentation of trauma, on competitive forms of memory, or on the transcultural/national significance of such events. The significance and contribution of such perspectives on 9/11 fiction should not be discounted, and yet such theoretical frameworks and vocabularies are not helpful to a comparative study of translation shifts that prioritises textual vulnerabilities and inconsistencies over cultural or reception-led modes of traumatic representation.

A comparative study of text and translation has been instrumental in exposing the textual and empathic mechanisms of source-target interactions across the translation divide. This is particularly true of deictic language, which can be assimilated into a kind of blueprint of the empathic positions that underpin each text. The translation – as a double, rather than a duplicate – offers a second schematic which can be directed compared, even projected, over the positions of its source language counterpart. Any divergences – indicated by translation shifts – expose where the texts fundamentally differ in terms of their empathic constructions of the world, and where traumatic experience – as a physical, temporal and perspectival concept – is vulnerable to unsettlement. While it is true that the deictic positions in a given text can be mapped without a second, translated text for comparison, the cohesive and cumulative impact of such positions is all the more difficult to chart where any alternate version of the text remains wholly theoretical and speculative. Translation shifts in deixis therefore offer an opportunity to trace the empathic impact of otherwise isolated references to space, temporality and perspective, by exposing alternative positions that emerge from the textual conditions. Furthermore, analysing the cumulative impact of such shifts is particularly apt in the study of texts that explicitly seek to chart and understand the repercussive effects of trauma, in a further example of resonance between the

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Culture of Commemoration and E. Ann Kaplan's book, 'Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature'. The common thread that links each of these sources is in the reception of the visual imagery of trauma, where traumatic experience – captured in temporal suspension as a single image – is understood via its reception and assimilation into wider discourses on trauma. Full references for each of the texts cited above are included in the bibliography.

methodology of this comparative empathic study and the content of the works themselves.

It is the positioning of the traumatic event, rather than the traumatic nature of the event itself, that has facilitated a successful, comparative reading of text and translation, and which makes 9/11 fiction an ideal sounding board for a translation shift analysis. The literary representation of 9/11 gives rise to many of the conditions required for an empathy-led reading of the texts: the destabilising effects of trauma on deictic categories, the role of aftermath as a tenuous temporal form, and the (in)authenticity of memory and imagination in the wake of a visually- documented, media event. Yet by far the most instrumental factor in this analysis has been the deictic location of the epicentre of the traumatic event that, in its most fundamental sense, occupies a fixed, singular location, consistent across both texts. However, the specificity of this traumatic centre also poses one of the greatest challenges to expanding the work done in this thesis into new literary terrains. 9/11 fiction is temporally isolated as a literary moment and as a genre that, some sixteen years on from the attacks, has all but ceased production. The most logical step from this thesis would therefore be to consider other works of literature that arise from those conditions where novel writing offers the possibility for empathic experimentation. The clearest leap is to works that chart traumatic experience, primarily disaster and dystopian fiction.[8] However, to suggest that the efficacy and insight of translation shift analyses is limited to these parallel bodies of work is fairly short-sighted, particularly considering that is it the positioning of the traumatic event, and not the nature of the trauma itself, from which this comparative text-translation analysis has emerged.

The potential for further empathy-led analyses of source and target texts is considerable where it is possible to isolate the empathic structures and insecurities of parallel works of fiction of any language pairing. Foregrounding comparative textual

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[8] One scholar to make the leap from 9/11 fiction to creative production surrounding a subsequent traumatic event is Arin Keeble, in his work on documentaries created in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Similarly, Anna Hartnell has expanded readings of American exceptionalism to find cohesive links between discourses on 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Haitian earthquake in 2010. Beyond her reference to Dave Egger's post-Katrina novel *Zeitoun*, Hartnell's discussion, in contrast to Keeble's, is not strictly literary, but does seek to articulate the same political and nationalistic narratives of incommensurability that frame and contextualise literary production (as was the case in this study's analysis of Jess Walter's *The Zero*). These attempts to expand discussions of 9/11 beyond the limits of victim/perpetrator, to consider disaster as trauma, go some way to explain attempts to appropriate Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* into the 9/11 'canon'. From this perspective, literary representations of the traumatic repercussions of temporally, geographically or culturally isolated events are the closest relatives of 9/11 fiction, rather than those that seek to articulate experiences of victimhood in the wake of terrorist attacks.

material as the grounds for analysis circumvents the need for such a study to be encumbered by notions of translator agency and reader reception (whether linguistic, cultural or temporal in nature): factors which, in the context of this thesis, would have restricted the possibility for literary creation and reciprocity across the translation divide. To return to the chapter of this thesis that almost was, it was the lack of comparative textual material that sealed the fate of *Netherland*, rather than a lack of engagement on the part of either source or target text with the wider frames and conceptualisations of empathy established in other chapters. A translation shift analysis must build from the ground up. To employ a process of imposing generic frameworks and thematic categories derived from this analysis in the study of further works would contradict the ethos of reciprocity on which this thesis is built, and would further the hold of instructive frameworks for literary translation analysis in translation studies as a whole. This decision perhaps seems reactive, and yet resistance is where this thesis began, with the desire to challenge binary, difference-led conceptualisations of literary works and the growing agency of the translator in theoretical discourses.

This thesis exemplifies how a shift in critical perspective, that relocates texts and translations into a truly reciprocal relationship, offers a unique critical tool for the analysis of source and target texts and inherently bi-directional works of fiction. The unlikely image of a Newton's cradle is a useful one here, and captures the continuous reciprocity that a comparative approach to literary translation might offer. The momentum that propels the balls of a Newton's cradle can never be destroyed, only converted; an echo of the bi-directional momentum of a parallel reading of text and translation that this thesis advocates. Rather than a translated text creating derivative versions of a source text, or serving as evidence for narrative inconsistencies or underexplored themes, translation shifts demonstrate how each innovation or shift in the target text impacts on a reciprocal reading of the source text, which in turn highlights further shifts, the momentum of which creates narrative cohesion or thematic shifts not explicitly present in the original text. Just as a Newton's cradle represents an isolated system, a textual analysis of translation shifts liberates comparative readings from the external forces and interference of reader reception, cultural contexts of literary production, reproduction and readership, and translator agency. The result is a lens on how 9/11 fiction engages with the same empathic structures that a reciprocal reading of

text and translation seeks to secure, offering a unique insight into the literary features of both texts, as well as the possibility for mutual exchange across the translation divide.

Translation as a force for subversion

Emphasising the potential for innovation and creativity in translation generally evokes images of newness and of addition, where translation shifts are seen to offer a productive means of extending and diversifying source text content, which is in turn rendered all the more rich as a result of the reciprocity across the texts. While this is certainly true, translation shifts also hold much subversive potential as forces for destabilising source text narratives, particularly where deictic structures begin to work independently from, or even contrary to, those structures set in motion by empathic interactions between characters. In all four text-translation pairings in this thesis, there are clear examples of how translation shifts create or impose order: be it chronology, clear deictic and pronominal categories, or distinctions between (in)authentic visual realms. However, in doing so, translations not only demonstrate their potential for creating narrative cohesion, but are also able to shift focus onto problematising the empathic connections and interactions of those implicated in the empathic networks and relative positions with which their source text counterparts are concerned.

In *L'homme qui tombe*, cumulative translation shifts demonstrate an intensification of deictic language in passages where intimacy and interaction are shown to destabilise and resist the stagnating effects of the deictic categories of space, time and perspective on traumatic experience. In contrast, the subversive force of translation shifts in *Un Concours de Circonstances* reverses this process of amplification, and instead problematises the interaction-led network of empathic positions in the text by elevating the status and impact of physical artefacts of grief. In a significant translation shift, 'the dead' become 'les disparus', and the translated text introduces a second, 'unseen' realm into an otherwise delineated and categorised map of empathic positions and perspectives. While *Terroriste* does not explicitly subvert the empathic networks forged in the source text in the same way as *Un Concours de Circonstances*, there is evidence to suggest that translation shifts mitigate the more radical aspects of Ahmad's narrative on transcendental distance and proximity, dampening the certainty and absolute difference established between deictic positions and hierarchies. Together, these examples suggest that translation shifts are not confined to the deictic categories of the source text, and may

instead subvert or undermine the stability of their relative empathic positions; a stability that is maintained by the source text in a reciprocal analysis of text and translation. Such shifts do not align with popular definitions of explicitation as a form of addition, whereby source text structures are considered as a baseline or blueprint for translation, to which clarifications and explanations are then added. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to seek out compensatory measures for these subversive shifts in the translated text; this form of translation analysis would only introduce problematic binaries and the concept of bargaining, rather than true exchange, into a comparative reading of the texts. Examples of subversive translation shifts serve as a reminder of the potential for genuine reciprocity between texts and translations, where the innovation of a translated text has the remit to challenge the deictic categories and empathic structures on which their relative positions and interactions are founded. Lastly, the translation of *The Zero* best captures the subversive potential of the translation process, as a means of destabilising the empathic structures on which the source text is founded. Where characters in the source text show an ability for genuine empathic connection with the traumatic event, the translated text favours a form of contagion, whereby the empathic disconnect and degradation of Remy's perspective seemingly infiltrates Guterak's ability to articulate his traumatic experience in personal, emotional terms. The translation process enacts the empathic interference to which both texts can only implicitly allude, and muddies the otherwise clear contrast and differentiation between what, in the source text, are independent and interconnected empathic positions, negotiated in proximity to the traumatic event.

Translation captures the empathic process of unsettlement, disturbance and relocation with which each and every text in this thesis grapples, performing the very dislocation that shapes and drives 9/11 fiction. Yet this process goes beyond performance, and this study has illustrated how translation shifts expose translation as a process of empathic doubling, founded on the same principles of exchange, conflict, competition and interaction that each of the novels navigate. Crucially, these shifts are not vehicles of duplication or recreation, but markers of the empathic vulnerabilities to which 9/11 novels are susceptible in translation, and of the inherent interconnectedness of source and target texts. The challenge in defining the nature of these interactions is in their unpredictability, and translation shifts are as likely to trigger textual cohesion and clarification as they are dissonance, innovation and complexity. The one consistent feature is their reciprocity and the irrefutable connection they forge between texts and

translations on a fundamental, textual level, as points of collision that mirror, perform, subvert and unsettle the empathic structures of both texts.

Empathy in practice: Thematic connectivity in 9/11 fiction in translation

With each chapter of this thesis, a translation shift analysis has been constructed in response to the unique interactions between the translated text and the original: no framework for thematic analysis has been adopted based on the findings from a previous novel-translation pairing. As such, this approach has advocated the analysis of texts and translations as empathically-isolated works, unimpeded by a thematic framework derived from the relative empathic positions of a second, autonomous text-translation pairing. One strength of this ground-up approach is that any intertextual links across novels and translations are the result of a close, empathic reading of source and target texts, and cannot be attributed to a descriptive form of analysis that actively seeks to construct generalised and replicable strategies for literary analysis. Given that the novels in this thesis were selected to provide a deliberately fragmentary overview of 9/11 fiction – prioritising disparity and diversity over cross-textual cohesion – it is particularly significant that there are a number of consistencies in their explorations of empathy.

Moreover, this thematic cohesion is doubled in translation: it is present in the source texts, bound together as a congruous literary genre, and in the interventions that the translation process itself enacts on the empathic networks and mechanisms that bridge the translation divide. Extensive in their reach, these thematic links see the empathic doubling performed by the translation process crystallised in the content of the literary works themselves, and this conclusion will focus on the most incisive examples of this genre of translation shifts. These include the recurrent representation of the imagination, and an overwhelming preoccupation with the 'visual realm' across all of the texts; sex and intimacy as a dialogue on empathy and appropriation; and the role of translated texts in challenging narratives of authenticity.

(In)visible trauma

It would be easy, even tempting, to explain the near-compulsive repetition with which characters analyse the visual (and visible) manifestations of trauma as symptoms of the visual, media-dominated legacy of 9/11. Yet aside from any deliberate designs to resist contextual and reception-led models for analysing 9/11 fiction in translation, this

thesis has thrived on the insecurities and vulnerabilities that literary translation creates. In the face of destabilised deictic terrains, unsettled concepts of temporality, and empathic failures, characters desperately seek stability in the physical and visible evidence of traumatic experience. In *Falling Man*, Keith may lament his lack of lasting injuries or 'organic shrapnel', but refuses to relinquish a random suitcase, saved from the North Tower stairwell, to anyone but its rightful owner. Meanwhile, Lianne sees the figures of the Towers haunting still life paintings in her mother's art collection, while the Falling Man, re-enacting the fall of bodies from the World Trade Centre, brings her much closer to understanding trauma, albeit through vicarious means, than the suffering of her own husband and son. The characters of *The Submission* are bound together by the possibility of their grief being made tangible in the form of Mo's memorial, which is tasked with representing trauma without dismantling traumatic experiences and identities. The world of Updike's *Terrorist* is similarly oppressive in its physicality. The crush of the furniture store, of his mother's promiscuity in the walls of their tiny apartment, of Joryleen's presence, and of a space teeming with 'low creatures' and 'unbelievers' both define and destabilise Ahmad's empathic conceptualisation of his reality. These artefacts are, in many cases, ciphers of traumatic experience as accessed via empathic means, whether as empathic gestures enacted by the translation process, or between fictional identities themselves.

In contrast, in *The Zero*, Remy is plagued by the fallibility of his memory, his eyesight and his ever-failing grip on the temporal and causal links between action and consequence. Remy's failures of imagination are not so much an inability to visualise and virtually experience trauma, but to delineate tangible markers of lived experience (his head injury, a sweater in a ruined store, his faltering watch, his own handwriting) from imagined empathic and traumatic scenarios. In this sense, Remy's imagination provides an innovative, alternative terrain to its tangible and traumatised counterpart. More generally, imagined spaces, identities and experiences allow characters to explore the aftermath of the trauma free from the constraint of deictic categories, and as a means of regaining agency in the face of dissonant deictic or empathic connections. To return momentarily to the image of empathic maps, the sculpting of the imagination via comparative means introduces a new layer to this topography, in much the same way as Hans, navigating Google Earth, might add another virtual filter to his digital map. While the imagined worlds of the novels offer new and hypothetical empathic positions for the

protagonists to explore, they remain anchored to the same traumatic centre as their 'real' counterparts, and therefore cannot be wholly devolved from its the deictic and empathic structures.

In each of the above cases, and many more for which the scope of this conclusion cannot account, these salvaged objects serve as Janus-faced artefacts of the traumatic event: physical remnants of the tangible forces of the fall of the towers that are indicative of unseen, imagined, (mis)remembered and subjective experiences of trauma. The duality in this image is particularly apt in this case, not only capturing the two gazes of each object – one towards the traumatic centre, one away into its aftermath – but also the status of the translated text, as a slightly contorted mirror-image of its source language counterpart. In each case, the visible realm alludes to its unseen double, whether imagined, forgotten or unreachable. One of the most incisive examples of this duality is the conversion of 'the dead' into 'les disparus' in *Un Concours de Circonstances*. 'Les disparus' are at once absent (though not entirely erased) and unseen: the visible evidence of their disappearance endures and is to be enshrined in the creation of the memorial.[9] There are no bodies to bury, and there is therefore no physical evidence of their death, and yet the translation shift is bound up in the language of perception and visibility. 'The disappeared' secures a significant empathic shift in translation: carving out a space that is unoccupied by the concrete identities elsewhere in the text, and unrestricted by the deictic forces on which these same post-traumatic identities are founded. Therefore, although liberated from the limits of sight and visibility to which other identities must adhere as empathic entities, 'les disparus' functions as a homogenised category (rather than a distinctive identity) that is vulnerable to objectification, appropriation and vicarious approaches to empathy.[10]

Though beginning with empathic unsettlement, mapping 9/11 texts and translations has explored the whole spectrum of empathic engagement: from crude empathy, appropriation and pity through to genuine unsettlement, virtual experiences of victimhood and reciprocal empathy. However, with each close reading, it has been

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[9] In other novels, this state of oscillation between visible and invisible terrains has been maintained by the pervasive presence of the missing posters and photographs of victims of the attacks, plastering the walls of downtown Manhattan.

[10] Similarly, in *Le Zero*, it is the imagined victims who are 'reduced to nothing' (p.39), in place of the destruction of their physical surroundings. This translation shift consolidates the protagonist's reliance on the unseen realm of his imagination to create identities with whom he ultimately fails (or refuses) to connect via any empathic pathway.

increasingly difficult to confine empathy to these terms, and to impose value judgements on how successfully characters engage with empathy: a question that, in part, returns to the issue of authenticity. A recurring theme when locating empathic positions in the post-9/11 realm has been that of voyeurism: a concept with which all of the texts and translations in this study have engaged. Like so many of the wider thematic links across the texts, questions surrounding the morality and position of the voyeur begin outside of the texts, with the event itself. As was outlined at the beginning of this thesis, 9/11 fiction writing is preceded and, to a large extent, overshadowed by a 'live', mediated experience of trauma, and any literary engagement with the event inevitably comes up against the overwhelming archive of visual, multimedia representations of the attacks. For many 9/11 novelists, responding to the attacks through journalistic, reflective writing captured immediate reactions that their fictions would go on to develop: a delayed, literary response that Don DeLillo hoped could form the 'counternarrative' in the face of terrorist dominance over narratives of the event, and the prolific visual status and dissemination of the attacks themselves. The burning question for novelists and critics alike was whether fiction was capable of intervening in post-9/11 narratives; a concern that I believe extends to encompass the role of translated works as an extended form of traumatic witnessing. Several of the novels in this thesis directly and consciously intervene in this process, problematising the status of victimhood that arises from vicarious witnessing and voyeurism. Though the nationalistic rhetoric assigned to this form of witnessing in *The Submission* raises interesting questions for culturally-bound translation analyses, it is Guterak, in *The Zero*, who best captures the challenge of writing about 9/11, as well as its translation:

> '"I envy people who watched it on TV. They got to see the whole thing… Sometimes, I think the people who watched it on TV saw more than we did. It's like, the further away you were from this thing, the more sense it made."'[11]

Guterak's comments succinctly articulate one of the recurrent hypotheses with which this comparative analysis of 9/11 fiction has grappled: whether the distance and dilation enacted by the translation process clarifies the empathic structures of original works of 9/11 fiction. To some extent, this is true: cohesive translation shifts in the deictic categories of *L'homme qui tombe,* and the attribution of agency through pronominal translation shifts in *Un Concours de Circonstances,* have contributed to deictic

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[11] Jess Walter, *The Zero* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), p.85.

perspectives on the traumatic event that are more explicit and logical in structure than their source text counterparts. However, it would be incorrect to extrapolate this observation to claim that the translation of 9/11 fiction provides a perspective of temporal and spatial distance that clarifies source text structures. Instead, the translation of 9/11 fiction intervenes in the deictic processes that define empathic responses to the traumatic event, creating a literary double from which distance and dilation can be approached as interactive or subversive features of source-target relationships.

<u>Sex and intimacy</u>

From the perspective of an empathic mapping of literature, sex and intimacy hold all the promise of genuine empathic connection, exchange and reciprocity, and of finding congruence in the deictic categories of the post-traumatic realm as a means of transcending their oppressive presence. Put simply, sex – as a throwback to the interactions and connections that precede trauma – has the potential to offer a form of proximity that is not defined by the deictic categories or empathic positions that directly result from the traumatic event. However, the novels and translation in this study have revealed the empathic potential of sex and intimacy to be no more than a ruse: as a means to consolidate or understand one's own empathic position and agency through the shared experience offered by physical intimacy.

It is difficult to define or categorise how sex and intimacy are treated in translation, as there appears to be little consistency in how the translation process intervenes in the failed process of forging empathic connections via intimacy. However, the one common factor in all of the target texts in this thesis is their exploration of sex in deictic terms, where proximity is a strictly measurable, physical concept, rather than an emotional connection or closeness. For example, in *Terroriste*, Ahmad's sexual encounter with Joryleen is preceded by a consistent mitigation of the extremes of the vertical axis that Ahmad constructs. As such, by the time Ahmad commits such a transgression, the translation has moved away from the deictic hierarchies that would secure the transcendental and revelatory nature of his sexual climax in the source text in translation. Similarly, in reference to sexual desire and Sean's perverse, masochistic fantasies involving Claire, *Un Concours de Circonstances* clarifies subject and object, assigning clear agency and instigatory power in any sexual encounter where these remain ambiguous in the source text. For an empathic analysis, this clarity of agency

communicates the distinct empathic positions occupied by each character, often relative to the character or position they wish to subjugate or possess.

However, as *L'homme qui tombe* demonstrates, deictic categories, as a means of navigating the most intimate of empathic gestures, are not infallible in translation. Instead, it is possible for sex to destabilise the very deictic categories on which empathic interactions are otherwise founded, by intervening in the oppressive interplay between the private and public, to which the novel's empathic interactions are held hostage. The translation of DeLillo's text constructs new, cohesive narratives surrounding the possibility of sex as an act of exposure that is inherently performative: a physical display of intimacy undermines the pervasive influence of the public realm by revealing the extreme extent to which it has invaded private space. Yet, despite its function as a subversive deictic force, sex never results in genuine empathic connection and exchange between characters: it is a vehicle for characters to access the structures of their post-traumatic world as a means of consolidating and understanding their empathic positions and experiences of trauma. At best, sex and intimacy offer a fleeting glimpse of the potential for empathic connection in the post-traumatic realm, and yet in practice, serve as selfish, though refined, tools for appropriation, where one might encroach upon, and even violate, otherwise distinct empathic positions and experiences of trauma.

Translation interventions in the search for authenticity

9/11 fiction is haunted by the spectre of authenticity. Each of the four novels considered in this thesis grapple with notions of authenticity and unreliability, spearheaded by compromised characters for whom empathy proves a deceptive means of resolving traumatic experience. In *Falling Man*, Lianne conflates her father's suicide after his Alzheimer's diagnosis with trauma of her storyline session participants: a form of traumatic appropriation that extends to her husband as 9/11 survivor. What follows is a series of empathic interactions and tenuous connections that verge on appropriation, as Lianne' penchant for vicarious empathy and traumatic witnessing arguably proves more fruitful than her husband's stagnation at the poker tables. In *The Submission*, empathy is equally instrumentalised as a means of exercising access entitlement to coveted forms of victimhood, facilitated by the suppression and submission of others. *Terrorist* eschews conventional empathic connections and human interaction in favour of transcendental forms of proximity, distance and reverence, while the compromised protagonist of Jess Walter's *The Zero* fails to recognise the empathic implications of any of his interpersonal interactions. In each of these texts, empathy is

undermined, glorified, manipulated or ignored completely, but is consistently challenged as a means of navigating and resolving traumatic experience. Characters explicitly acknowledge and even crave the authentic and panoramic experience that true empathic engagement with the traumatic event promises, and yet all fall back on vicarious and voyeuristic approaches to empathic connection.

On an intertextual level, insecurities surrounding authenticity are made manifest in the creation of a translated text, as both empathic double and would-be textual 'usurper'. Moreover, in cases where translation shifts expose the potential for recreation and innovation in any given narrative on traumatic experience, establishing the limits of authenticity becomes all the more challenging. Yet the act of establishing authenticity in the case of 9/11, particularly with regards to the 'terrorist' psyche, is doomed to failure, not least as it invites external and evaluative perspectives on the viability of fictional narratives of trauma: a preoccupation of much critical literature on 9/11 fiction, particularly for DeLillo and Updike. What is particularly significant for a comparative analysis of these texts and their translations is that 9/11 fiction conscientiously and wilfully engages with the questions of authenticity that mire its reception; an issue that is explicitly extrapolated and problematised by the translation process itself as a means of replication and innovation. The translation process has the potential to serve as a destabilising, intervening force that problematises and extends the process of distanciation that fiction writing inevitably involves, via both temporal and empathic means. In this sense, translated texts have the potential to dispel the narratives of authenticity that hound 9/11 fiction, offering a unique perspective on ongoing debates surrounding the efficacy and future direction of literary translation studies, as well as consolidating the value of 9/11 fiction as a rich literary terrain for comparative study.

9/11 fiction: A new perspective on the 'crisis of opposition'

From these unifying themes, it is possible to begin to make a strong case for the efficacy and relevance of comparative translation analysis as a tool for offering new insights into 9/11 fiction. Using empathic frameworks for mapping the encounters that occur within and across the texts, it is possible to create a wider topography of how each pairing interacts with unifying concepts and definitions of empathy. The potential success of this form of analysis – were it to be extended to further works of 9/11 fiction – would not be to prove that 9/11 fiction is inherently empathic (a conclusion to which this

analysis has already contributed considerable evidence) but to demonstrate how comparative translation analysis offers a unique insight into the empathic construction of texts on a replicable and comparative scale. Free from the confines of imposing thematic templates or translation strategies on a given text-translation pairing, empathically mapping texts offers the scope and flexibility to account for translation shifts regardless of inconsistences in form or literary style. More generally, the emergence of recurrent themes in the texts – particularly those unified by deictic or empathic structures – arguably strengthens the case for conceptualising 9/11 fiction as a distinct and autonomous sub-genre of contemporary literature. One of the inspirations for this comparative study was grounded in a desire to explore the breadth and innovation of 9/11 fiction as a contemporary literary phenomenon with something of a chequered reputation. Critical literature is always quick to contest whether fiction-writing that responds directly to the September 11th attacks can be amalgamated into a cohesive genre, and yet this oft-repeated criticism seems to be a truism of critical literature with no clear, singular source of origin. Yet although this thesis has never claimed to serve as a treatise on the viability of 9/11 as literary genre, a comparative analysis of *Falling Man, The Submission, Terrorist, The Zero*, and their translations, has revealed significant, thematic connectivity and cohesion. Furthermore, these thematic links are not merely confined to the trappings of plot and characterisation, but embody the problematic and subversive potential of the translation process as a vehicle for cross-textual interaction. Through the use of topographical representations of empathy, it has been possible to uncover the mechanisms through which these empathic interactions are constructed, and offer an insight into the wider structures of empathy as an interactive and intertextual feature of 9/11 fiction.

The emergence of thematic connectivity and empathic compatibility across the source and target texts in this thesis has remedied one of the initial insecurities faced at the inception of this study: whether it would be possible to generate conclusions on 9/11 fiction as a genre from a translation-oriented analysis. The selection of four disparate text-translation pairings has gone some way in mitigating this concern, in offering a fragmentary portrait of literary responses to 9/11 without the intention of attributing a chronological or developmental structure to the texts. Instead, this thesis has been guided by reciprocity at every turn, driven by a firm belief in the value and innovation of a comparative translation approach as a critical lens for literary analysis. The greatest challenge, therefore, is of how to articulate the conclusions of such an analysis in this

same spirit of reciprocity, while ensuring that both source and target texts are represented, and that the value of a comparative approach is clearly stated. While I believe it possible to speak of 9/11 fiction, it is perhaps more loyal to the ideological aims of this thesis to speak of a genre *in translation*, where both source and target texts are equally present. This may seem pedantic, and yet without parity in terminology, it becomes increasingly difficult to represent reciprocity and exchange across the translation divide without perpetuating concepts of difference and division.

In another echo of the critical reception of 9/11 fiction, seeking out reciprocity has liberated this study from conceptualisations of 9/11 texts as perpetuations of a 'crisis of opposition: [of] them and us, the personal and political, the private and the public, the oppressor and the victim.'[12] While these configurations do exist within the texts, they are assimilated into more complex empathic networks that see identities as relative, interactive positions around a centrifugal, traumatic centre. Crucially, the translated text does not perpetuate these binaries, nor does it offer an oppositional counterpoint to the original text. Instead, the translation process acts intervenes in a nuanced network of proximity and distanciation that already outstrips Gray's vision of the genre. Similarly, this thesis does not offer an evaluative measure of how empathic, or not, a text might be, but instead captures how translation shifts might be positioned on a wider spectrum of empathy and reciprocity. Translation shifts reveal the transient nature of empathic encounters: the more cumulative and cohesive their effects, the more susceptible the interaction or encounter is to a shift in perspective, temporality or location. To this end, 9/11 fiction seems to contradict the tenuous criteria outlined for the genre as counternarrative, the calls for which seem fairly restrictive in hindsight. Somewhat ironically, rather than foregrounding conflict and differentiation, a study of empathy and proximity in translation has provided an incredibly rich form of comparative analysis, and an insight into the polyphony that emerges from what has elsewhere been considered an inhibited, domestic genre of fiction.

As a genre *in translation,* 9/11 fiction offers a unique insight into the multiplicity, connectivity and conflict on which empathy – as a spectrum of empathic interactions and unsettlements – is founded. Yet aside from this empathic cohesion, and in addition to the multiple thematic commonalities between the texts in this thesis, one

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[12] Richard Gray, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), p.65.

cannot overlook the significance of the numerical moniker by which the event, and its fiction, is universally known. 9/11 fiction is defined, first and foremost, by a single event: a date that emphasises the temporal confines of any work of literature to which it speaks. In its simplest sense, 9/11 marks the inception of a timeline of fiction-writing where the source text, though a delayed response to the real-world event, will always precede the translated text. As such, a basic two-part dilation of the event is created: a ripple-effect, moving ever outwards from a common point of origin. Yet, the categorisation of texts and translations as temporal moments overlooks one of the most pressing concerns for post-9/11 writers as well as the translation of their works: the destabilising effects of a sustained, and largely immeasurable, period of aftermath.

The problematic temporal status of aftermath also calls attention to the potential pitfalls of structuring any study of 9/11 fiction – whether comparative or not – in chronological or temporal terms. In longitudinal literary studies, it is often logical to deal with novels in the order in which they were published, illustrating how each is somehow a product of the temporal and historical moment from which it emerges. However, from start to finish, the publication and translation of the four novels in this thesis spanned only six years: *Terrorist* and *The Zero* both debuting in 2006 (their French translations published in 2009 and 2012 respectively), followed in quick succession by DeLillo's *Falling Man* in 2007 (translated in 2010), and Amy Waldman's *The Submission* in 2011 (translated in 2013). Not only would this temporal and reception-led structure be in direct conflict with the ideological aims of this study, but in the case of 9/11 novels, and particularly when this is narrowed to a corpus of translated texts, chronology is a largely arbitrary frame for textual analysis. Similarly, structuring the novels based on the temporality of their content – from the fall of the towers (*Falling Man* and *The Zero)*, to their impact on the individual (*Terrorist*) and eventual commemoration (*The Submission*) – would betray the complex insecurities surrounding aftermath and consequence with which each pair of texts grapples.

9/11 fiction emerged from a period of intense literary production and translation which, some sixteen years on from September 11th 2001, has all but ceased. While this thesis provides new and insightful evidence of literary features that strengthen the case for 9/11 novels as a unique genre of contemporary literature, it is the emergence of these works from a single moment - and the intensity of their focus and production - that remains the strongest and most consistent feature the texts and their translations. This

description is reminiscent of the image of Remy's watch in *The Zero*: the frozen second hand he expects to see replaced with the smooth, gliding movement of each moment being 'scratched away'.[13] 9/11 literature oscillates between these two states. The texts in this thesis are suspended in the temporal intensity of the event, of traumatic experience, and in the languishing temporal field of aftermath. Yet characters are also repetitive, and almost compulsive, in their search for closure, understanding, authenticity – *meaning* – in every moment, gesture and relationship. In *Un Concours de Circonstances*, this repetition becomes ritualistic, echoing the cyclical action of counting rosary beads. It is translation that intervenes in this intense, cyclical experience of post-traumatic temporality, introducing the liberating possibility of unsettlement and empathic displacement.

Capturing the empathic potential of 9/11 fiction

The guiding principle in the structure of this study has been empathy, with each of the text-translation pairings considered in this thesis capturing an instance of the empathic potential and inherent unsettlement found in 9/11 fiction in translation. Rather than categorising the empathic potential of each novel pairing on an evaluative scale, the chapters are structured in such a way that they illustrate the spectrum of empathic complexity with which the novels engage, each increasing the stakes of the translation process as an intervening force.

Falling Man and *L'homme qui tombe* offer the most insular empathic constructions of any of the texts in this thesis, where the complexity of the deictic mapping enacted by a comparative analysis sheds lights on the vast potential for appropriation and voyeurism via empathy. The empathic gaze of the novel is distinctly inward-looking and largely self-centered. Though bound by the repetitive, cyclical structure of the narrative, it is the empathic failures at every juncture of the text – and in every interaction – that confirms the impossibility of recovery. A comparative analysis of deictic categories has revealed the empathic mechanisms and paralysis on which these encounters and interactions are built and, in response to the criticism levelled against DeLillo's text as a stunted, domesticated look at the post-traumatic realm, suggests that his characters' impotence is grounded in their failure to secure empathy, rather than their humdrum circumstances.

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[13] *The Zero*, p.96.

The Submission and *Un Concours de Circonstances* introduce empathic multiplicity, where the relative positions of identities are the explicit source of conflict, manipulation and negotiation. The texts grapple with the criteria for empathy that, in *Falling Man*, remain implicit: issues of agency and impotence, gendered and cultural power, as well as a consistent pursuit of legitimising the coveted status of victimhood. Both novels thrive on the notions of difference that the methodological thrust of this study has sought to problematise: a distinction and distanciation of identities and communities in which the translation process plays a key, destabilising role. As the closest any of the texts in this thesis come to representing 'reality', it is tempting to appropriate *The Submission* and *Un Concours de Circonstances* into real-world discourses on exceptionalism, commemoration and racial tension, and yet the real substance of both texts is in how these overarching ideas are realised and navigated in translation as textual, empathic encounters.

It is with John Updike's *Terrorist* and its French counterpart *Terroriste* that the potential for empathic readings of 9/11 fiction via comparative translation analyses becomes truly explicit. In contrast to the multiplicity of Waldman's text, and the empathic shortcomings of DeLillo's characters, *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* are fully submerged in the psyche of the individual, exploring a world defined by distance, proximity and empathy. Ahmad's reality is fundamentally empathic; constructed on a fervent belief in the hierarchical structure of the world, from the dizzying vertical heights of his God, to the lowly non-believers and low creatures for whom only the crudely empathic notion of pity is appropriate. These empathic junctures between text and translation are amplified through the cohesion of translation shifts, which construct a narrative on empathic distance that consistently references relative notions and positions of proximity, while emphasising the revelatory potential in Ahmad's otherwise fragmentary empathic encounters. By mitigating distance, the translated text favours proximity, increasing the same potential for empathic exchange and reciprocity that such a remapping of relative positions implies. Indeed, a comparative analysis of *Terrorist* and *Terroriste* begins to tap into the reciprocity that this study has upheld as its main objective, whereby the empathic potential in the texts is more than the sum of its parts. It is only through comparison that the complexity of the novel's engagement with empathy - as a spectral phenomenon - is made visible, and only a translated text can offer such a critical lens through which the empathic axes of the novel are accessible.

Finally, *The Zero* and *Le Zero* represent empathic readings of 9/11 fiction in translation at their most creative and complex. For me, this pairing best captures the potential for reciprocity in source and target texts as a force for innovation, creativity, nuance and subversion. These texts expose the mechanisms by which post-traumatic empathy - in the wake of American exceptionalism and an increasing obsession with authenticity - is doomed to fail. In many ways, the novel and its translation offer a kind of treatise on why fiction-writing can never hope to meet expectations in responding to the trauma of 9/11, as its protagonist – compromised as traumatic witness, bereft of moral foresight, and insensitive to the basic structures of chronology and causality – is completely disarmed of the empathic tools necessary for recovery and insight. Translation shifts make this process of degeneration all the more explicit: the parallel source-target narratives they construct acting to problematise and destabilise the empathic interactions and reliability of both texts simultaneously. Only through a comparative reading is it possible to access the narratives on empathic contagion with which the source text engages, as well as the function of the imagination as a kind of empathic placeholder and driver of plausible deniability for the morally-compromised Remy. As a stand-alone comparison, *The Zero* and *Le Zéro* capture the reciprocity and innovation to be found in comparative translation analyses of 9/11 fiction and yet, without the incisive and diverse contributions offered by DeLillo, Waldman, and Updike's works in translation, the case for translation as a fundamentally empathic process that is responsive to the empathic insecurities of 9/11 fiction would be all but impossible to construct.

The impetus of this comparative study has always been to demonstrate the potential for reciprocity and innovation in the comparative analysis of contemporary literature, particularly those genres that display the same empathic inhibitions and insecurities as the translation process itself. Yet no such study can exist in a vacuum without the context and influence of the theoretical field from which is emerges: that of literary translation studies. Although I have strived to be clear on the ideological dilemma of appropriating the findings of this study into a wider translation approach or strategy, it would be naive to assume that my line of argument is immune to the influence of conventional theory and the ongoing debates that shape the field to which this study is fundamentally allied. As this study has discovered, the insecurities of 9/11 texts echo ongoing debates surrounding the viability of their translations, particularly surrounding issues such as authenticity, appropriation and legitimacy. Therefore, it is necessary to

consider where this study is positioned – perhaps not empathically, but certainly in ideological terms – relative to the translation conventions that this study had originally sought to interrogate.

<u>Challenging theoretical conventions in translation theory</u>

While this study certainly began with the intention of challenging the prevalence of domesticating and foreignising literary translation approaches, these strategies have proved largely irrelevant to a comparative study of 9/11 fiction. However, looking back at the origins from which this study emerged, and the translation theories which gave initial impetus to a comparative lens on contemporary fiction, it is important to state in clear terms how far this thesis offers a fundamental counterpoint to translation strategies founded on concepts of difference and reception. As Venuti has claimed for his own strategy for translation,

> [t]he terms 'domestication' and 'foreignisation' do not establish a neat binary opposition that can simply be superimposed on 'fluent' and 'resistant' discursive strategies…The terms 'domestication' and 'foreignisation' indicate fundamentally ethical attitudes towards foreign text and culture, ethical effects by the strategy devised to translate it, whereas terms like 'fluency' and 'resistancy' indicate fundamentally discursive features of translation strategies in relation to the reader's cognitive processing.[14]

There are several aspects of this definition to which this thesis responds, refuting the attempt at nuance that Venuti seeks to find in domesticating and foreignising approaches. What is unspoken, but irrefutably present, in the invocation of 'ethical attitudes' to translation is the role and agency of the translator, as an ethical agent with the ability to intervene in a foreign culture or readership via translation. From a methodological perspective, such agents are incredibly difficult to account for, particularly where a translation strategy is to account for the autonomy of the source text itself: a necessary step, but one that many theorists rail against in an attempt to emphasise the significance of translation practice. Ethics becomes increasingly tricky in the case of 9/11 fiction, as it invites external criticism and value judgements on an event which has already been divided into victims and perpetrators: a dichotomy in which the texts and translations seek to intervene, but that in a domesticating or foreignising approach is forfeit to the reception of the target text. The analysis put forward in this study has been blissfully

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[14] Lawrence Venuti, 'The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation', (London: Routledge, 2012), p.19.

unencumbered by notions of ethics or trauma: empathic potential has not been established on its ethical viability but its textual possibilities. Moreover, the case for the translator as a cultural mediator becomes a largely moot point in the case of 9/11 which, as this thesis established at an early stage, holds a unique position as cross-cultural anchor in a genre of literature influenced, at least in part, by the prevalence of visual archives of the event. Therefore, in the case of 9/11 fiction and translation, both source and target text must contend with pre-existing narratives on trauma and empathy, as well as pervasive public narratives on the traumatic event.

Finally, Venuti's distinction between ethical intentions and discursive strategies is of particular relevance to this thesis as it suggests, if only superficially, that his theoretical stance allows for textual features to supercede issues of agency and reception. However, these discursive strategies are directly linked to notions of 'resistance' and 'fluency'. In such a model, translation shifts are reduced to a sad fate: as the products of translator agency, of reader reception and cognition, or as pawns in a wider strategy that is based on linguistic difference and reactivity. At no point in Venuti's definition is there room for reciprocity or exchange: only the implementation of a distinct strategy with clear aims and intentions, that dampens the rich intertextuality of text and translation in favour of systematic, utilitarian translation practices, is present. This raises an important caveat for identifying translation as an intervening force. For me, intervention speaks to relevance, efficacy and force, where translation shifts allow for creativity and maneuverability that is reactive to the textual possibilities set forth in source text. Crucially, these textual possibilities are not bound by context, nor by reception. Any innovation, any cohesion or clarification enacted by translation shifts is grounded in the textual features of the source text, and made possible by the translation as an inherently empathic process, that allows intertextuality and literary exchange to remain productively ensconced in the world of the text and translation. While translator intervention exists, and is increasingly well-documented, such a phenomenon is of no productive value to this study.

This thesis has illustrated how comparative analyses of contemporary literature have the potential to flourish when liberated from restrictive theories and methodologies surrounding translator agency and influence. Insisting on the agency and power of the translator undermines the innovation and essential literary features of translated texts, reducing the translation process to one of individual decisions, motivations and bias, and

of vague assumptions surrounding context and intent. Just as an analysis of 9/11 fiction based on author autobiography would reveal next to nothing of the empathic potential of the work, so too does translator studies reduce the translated text to a mere product of a translation process that is subject to the bias and intent of a translator. This evaluation of the role of the translator may seem scathing, but it is my firm belief that the future of literary translation studies, and particularly of comparative modes of analysis, rests on texts as texts: as complex, literary works that, in translation, are reciprocal, parallel and interactive. To focus on the translator as a form of literary instigator sheds no light on how texts and translations interact, and undermines the complexity of intertextual empathy to one of reception and recreation at the hands of an individual. Above all else, the translation shifts uncovered in this study, and the vast range of thematic and empathic networks to which these intertextual connections speak, have been established without any influence from the agents or external concepts that hover at the borders of the texts.[15]

As this study has gained momentum, it became increasingly important from an ideological, as well as a methodological, perspective to uphold the same values of reciprocity that an empathic analysis pursues. From a translation theory perspective, this meant resisting the temptation to draw decisive conclusions regarding empathy, particularly those that articulated a binary difference or choice. Questions concerning whether a translation shift is empathic or not, whether an unreliable narrator exerts genuine empathic intent, or whether characters are aware of the temporal conditions that their actions subvert, are largely irrelevant. Instead, the focus has been on establishing the grounds for empathic connection and interactions, using translation shifts as a means of identifying moments of empathic potential. The evidence overwhelmingly supports such an assertion, as well as the hypothesis that the translation process – as a means of constructing an empathic relationship between two reciprocal texts – intervenes in the empathic maps constructed by (and subsequently across) literary texts. Equally, foregrounding literary translation as an empathic and comparative process, rather than an action instigated by a translator agent, has facilitated the move away from conventional

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[15] The only potential source of interference is the unconscious bias or interpretation I may have imposed on the texts and translations as their reader. However, I have sought to mitigate the extent of this influence at every stage of this critical analysis: the text-translation pairings were selected to offer a fragmentary portrait of 9/11 fiction, rather than aligning with personal preferences. The term 'translation shift' has been applied objectively to those shifts not bound by grammatical, linguistic or equivalence-led criteria and have been used to generate empathic maps and frameworks, rather than derived from existing models or strategies for translation. This influence has been minimised to such an extent that I believe the claim to which this footnote is attached to be accurate.

translation strategies, the application of which generally require an acknowledgement of the contextual circumstances from which they arise and in which they operate in order to gain a methodological footing. Without such constraints, this comparative analysis resides within the same temporal categories that contain the novels, without looking back to the inception of the translation process, or beyond the confines of the texts to their reception and success as the product of a set of translation strategies. Therefore, what began as an exercise in challenging theoretical conventions and emerging lines of enquiry into translatorship and agency has evolved to align with the ideological values of this comparative study: to establish comparative literary analysis as a viable critical tool for literary analysis that offers a unique insight into 9/11 fiction while consolidating the potential of the translation as an intervening, empathic force.

<u>Translation shifts as ciphers</u>

This comparative analysis has consistently proven the role of translation shifts as ciphers for greater shifts in narrative cohesion, characterisation and style. The tendency of much literary translation theory is to deal with translation shifts from source to target texts as symptoms of a wider translation strategy or approach that can be articulated using existing terminology or fit into an accepted translation movement or turn. For example, a series of translation shifts might fit with an explicitation strategy, where adaptations and shifts are reactive to what are considered implicit aspects of the source text, or in order to clarify the target text for a given reader. Similarly, a series of cohesive shifts that might see the culturally-specific references of *The Submission* or the Qu'ranic excerpts in *Terrorist* maintained or accentuated could be understood as evidence of a foreignising translation approach. The translator notations in *Le Zéro* are most easily assimilated into this strategy-led approach to translation analysis, where explanatory footnotes provide a jolting reminder of external agency. Contrary to these macro-level forms of translation analysis, this thesis has started with the texts at their most essential level, uncovering and connecting translation shifts with the hypothesis that close textual analysis and comparison might reveal new insights into the interconnectivity of source and target texts in terms of the worlds of these texts, rather than those inhabited by the author, translator or reader. Here again we return to the dichotomy that the translated text derives from Edgar's world-view in *The Zero*: whether the world is one of action and reaction, or action and consequence. Translation shifts are not consequential but reactive, and not only reveal but drive and generate cohesive links, diversify the existing source text

material in stylistic, literary and textual terms, and offer new perspectives on the original text through parallel reading and comparison.

Liberating a comparative translation analysis from existing translation frameworks, movements and strategies has also allowed for more freedom and flexibility in articulating and accounting for unexpected outcomes and target text features. An empathic mapping of source and target texts has not only uncovered unprecedented cohesion across the translation divide, but has established the translation process as a force for creativity and subversion, that forges innovative, empathic positions, perspectives and possibilities in the target text. Yet this coherence should not be mistaken for homogeneity, and it would be ill-conceived to advocate the introduction of translation terminology to define and delineate such shifts, or to suggest that a generic framework or strategy for empathic analysis ought to be extrapolated from the findings of this study. The one exception to this rule – or, more accurately, ideological approach – has been in the coinage of the term 'translation shift', to account for those changes across the translation divide for which existing terminology on reception, explicitation and linguistic difference cannot account. There is much scope for future analyses focusing on these building blocks, where translation shifts, or some variation thereof that remains true to the ethos of reciprocity and comparison of which this thesis is a fierce proponent, may form the basis for innovative analyses of translated literary texts of any genre and language.

Concluding statements

This comparative study of 9/11 fiction in translation has sought to hold true to the ideological principles on which it was built: a firm belief in the value of literary translation studies, in the innovation and empathic potential of 9/11 fiction, and in the possibility for reciprocity between source and target texts. Reframing texts and translations as parallel, interactive and reciprocal works has offered a unique insight into how comparative modes of translation analysis serve as invaluable, critical tools for literary analysis while emphasising the innovation and creativity to be found in translated texts.

Yet the relationship between source and target texts is much more than a perfunctory, mutually-beneficial mode of exchange. Translation is a fundamentally empathic process that unsettles, destabilises and relocates the identities and encounters in a given text: doubling and enacting the same dislocating and dissonant process of

empathic unsettlement with which 9/11 fiction must grapple. While translations are inextricable from their source texts, so too are the empathic complexities and failures of 9/11 texts only truly recognisable through the comparative analysis of their translated counterparts: itself an empathic connection in which the translation process intervenes at every juncture. Any comparative literary analysis of texts should begin here: at these points of dissonance, cohesion and connection, where translation shifts expose the interconnectedness of texts and translation. Literary translation studies should begin with texts, and this study has offered a unique and creative insight into how translation shifts might be analysed as a means of reinstating the value of texts and their translations as rich, literary works, rather than discursive products of reception and context. It is only through this realisation – of the inherent empathy of the translation process, of the possibility for reciprocity and exchange across the translation divide, and of the vast textual complexities and creativity that translations shifts expose – that literary translation studies can hope to thrive alongside the relentless march of contemporary literary production.

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