

SAME DIFFERENCE? TRANSLATING ‘SENSITIVE TEXTS’

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Just like ideas of ‘equivalence’, the concept of ‘sameness’ in translation is not a neutral, univocal one: its interpretation can shift both diachronically and synchronically, with a variety of factors, be they individual or collective, influencing the outcome. This paper intends to investigate a specific example from one author’s work in translation with a view to highlighting the role played by social norms and ideological beliefs in the production and reception of translated texts.

Rosamond Lehmann (1901–1990) was an English writer, close to the Bloomsbury Set and author of several popular, critically acclaimed novels. However, her ‘scandalous’ narratives – including extra-marital affairs, gay and lesbian characters and abortion – perhaps rather predictably, provoked some strong reactions in Britain. Although all her books were translated with great success in France, it is perhaps surprising that four of her novels were published in Italy during the years of the Fascist regime. This paper outlines the French and Italian versions of *The Weather in the Streets*, published in 1936 and 1938 respectively, within their historical context.

Just like ideas of ‘equivalence’, the concept of ‘sameness’ in translation is not a neutral, univocal one: its interpretation can shift both diachronically and synchronically, with a variety of factors, be they individual or collective, influencing the outcome. This paper will investigate the Italian and French translations of the works of Rosamond Lehmann, and in particular her novel *The Weather in the Streets*, with a view to highlighting the role played by social norms and ideological beliefs in the production and reception of translated texts. As translators work, they generate a number of different possible alternatives and then select one of these solutions as the definitive translation. Traditionally we view these choices as dictated by the quest for equivalence, trying to say the same thing, or rather, saying things of equal value: descriptive studies, however, show that what translators do ‘varies according to their cultural and historical position’ (Pym 2014, 87). Equivalence, therefore, is not a stable, universal concept and, by adopting a descriptive approach, I hope to sidestep notions of faithfulness (or otherwise)

to the source text, textual equivalences and issues linked to perceived hierarchies. The moralizing vocabulary frequently adopted in such discussions, “infidelity, betrayal, violation, vulgarization, etc.” (Stam 2000, 54), will also be avoided.

Although taken from the work of one individual author, the example analyzed here is, I would argue, not at all unrepresentative. It belongs to the work of Rosamond Lehmann (1901-1990), a British writer with close ties to the Bloomsbury Set, as can be seen in her *Album*, replete with family photos together with Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Stephen Spender, Lytton Strachey, Vanessa Bell and the like. Echoing Don Quixote when he famously likens translations to looking at the backs of tapestries, where we can see the workings of language and the structure of the text but we don't have a clear picture of what is on the 'right side' (Cervantes 1999, 694), so Lehmann's friend and fellow author Elizabeth Jenkins comments: “Rosamond's life and books are like a carpet – the novels are the right side, where the pattern is clear, and the life is the other side with all the odd threads that don't fit” (Tindall 1985, 4).

There are, in fact, some striking parallels between Lehmann's life and the lives of her characters. She came from a 'good' upper middle class family: her father, Rudolph Chambers Lehmann, was a Liberal MP, founder of the literary magazine *Granta* and part of the Chambers dictionary family, one of her sisters, Beatrix, was an actor and theatre director, working with stars such as Bette Davis and John Gielgud, while her brother John was a publisher, poet and prolific writer. Just as her novels “address lesbianism, failed marriages, abortion, alcoholism, madness and death” with “none play[ing] out a conventional marriage plot” (Lewis 2002, 82), so Lehmann herself was married a first time, unhappily, to Leslie Runciman (later Viscount Runciman of Doxford) and, succumbing to her husband's pressure, underwent an unwanted abortion and then divorced; her second marriage to Wogan Philipps, from which two children were born, fared better but did not last; a small number of affairs followed before she embarked on a very public, ill-fated nine-year affair with Cecil Day-Lewis (later poet laureate), who – once he finally divorced his first wife left Rosamond to marry a much younger woman.

Lehmann's first novel, *Dusty Answer*, was hugely popular when it first came out in 1927, both in the UK and the US. It became something of a *succès de scandale*, dealing, as it does, with the story of a young woman, Judith Earle, who first has an affair with her childhood friend, Roddy, who turns out to be gay, before having her own lesbian relationship with Jennifer, a fellow student at Cambridge (where Lehmann herself had studied). As she wrote much later in 1983:

And all at once, bewilderingly, the book took off, had rave notices, became a best-seller. Book of the month in the USA. Translated into most European languages. In France the object of a kind of cult. And letters, letters, literally hundreds, poured in from strangers: mostly fan letters from young women, but once or twice venomous, abusive, such as one signed ‘Mother of Six’ and containing a simple message: ‘Before consigning your book to flames, would wish to inform you of my disgust that anyone could pen such filth, especially a MISS’ (Lehmann 1983, 42).

This first novel was followed by six more (*A Note in Music*, 1930; *Invitation to the Waltz*, 1932; *The Weather in the Streets*, 1936; *The Ballad and the Source*, 1944; *The Echoing Grove*, 1953; *A Sea-Grape Tree*, 1976.) She also wrote a play (*No More Music*, 1939), an autobiography (*The Swan in the Evening*, 1967) and, following the death of her daughter Sally at the age of only twenty-three, some rather fantastical works ‘conveying’ psychic contact with her daughter and others from beyond the grave. Lehmann was also a published translator from French with translations of *Geneviève* by Jacques Lemarchand (1947) and Jean Cocteau’s *Les Enfants terribles* (1955)¹.

Despite close ties with the Bloomsbury set, her novels did not enjoy the same enduring success as those of some of her peers and her work passed out of fashion after WWII, with many reviewers critical of her strong emphasis on the female point of view and some also slightly suspicious of her great popularity. In 1981, however, the British publishers, Virago – a feminist press with a policy of reclaiming women authors from the archives – began to re-publish Lehmann’s novels in their ‘Modern Classics’ series, and, thus, she enjoyed a second wave of popularity. Penguin also published two of her books, all widely reviewed, and in 1982 she was appointed Commander of the British Empire; the Book Marketing Council included her among the top twenty living British authors alongside names such as Anthony Burgess, Margaret Drabble, John Fowles, William Golding, Graham Greene, Ted Hughes and Iris Murdoch; she was the subject of the prestigious *Desert Island Discs* on BBC Radio²; the following year a film of *The Weather in the Streets* was made with Joanna Lumley and Michael York; in 2002, Helena Bonham Carter starred in *The Heart of Me*, a film version of *The Echoing Grove*.

¹ Her Cocteau translation appears in English with three different titles: as well as *Les Enfants terribles* (Penguin Modern Classics, 1961), the other titles are *Children of the Game* (Harvill, 1955) and *The Holy Terrors* (New Directions, 1957). Apart from an American 1930 translation, long out of print, Lehmann’s is the only English translation available today.

² The programme was broadcast on the 19th November 1982 and is available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p009mk6p> (accessed 3 Nov. 2017).

Lehmann's work was also widely appreciated outside the United Kingdom: her novels were all published almost simultaneously in the United States and (sometimes) Canada, and were translated into many foreign languages.³ This paper will outline in more detail the publications that appeared in France and Italy, beginning with *Dusty Answer*, translated into French as *Poussière* (Dust) in 1928 (a year after publication in English) and, from the very beginning, hugely popular and critically acclaimed. All Lehmann's novels were subsequently translated into French in many different, commercially successful editions. In Italy, *Dusty Answer* was first translated in 1930 as *Polvere* (Dust) and, again, in 1986, on the wave of Lehmann's renewed popularity, as *Risposte nella polvere* (Answers in the Dust).

The table below (with translators' names and publishing company) outlines how all Lehmann's works (including her 1967 autobiography) were translated into French almost immediately following publication in English while the Italian translations always appear with a certain delay and exclude her last two volumes.

| UK (USA in brackets) | France | Italy |
|--|---|---|
| 1927 (1927): <i>Dusty Answer</i> | 1928: <i>Poussière</i> Jean Talva, Plon | 1929: <i>Polvere</i> Sara Invrea, Bemporad 1986: <i>Risposte nella polvere</i> Maria Luisa Agosti Castellani, Tartaruga |
| 1930 (1930): <i>A Note in Music</i> | 1931: <i>Une note de musique</i> Jean Talva, Plon | 1934: <i>Una nota in musica</i> Carlo Coardi, Bompiani |
| 1932 (1932): <i>Invitation to the Waltz</i> | 1933: <i>L'invitation à la valse</i> Jean Talva, Plon | 1935: <i>Invito al valzer</i> Carlo Coardi, Bompiani |
| 1936 (1936): <i>The Weather in the Streets</i> | 1936: <i>Intempéries</i> Jean Talva, Plon | 1938: <i>Tempo d'amore</i> Enrico Piceni, Mondadori |
| 1944 (1945): <i>The Ballad and the Source</i> | 1945: <i>La ballade et la source</i> Jean Talva, Plon | 1950: <i>La balata e la sorgente</i> Silvana Mauri, Bompiani |
| 1953 (1953): <i>The Echoing Grove</i> | 1953: <i>Le jour enseveli</i> Anne Marcel, Plon | 1958: <i>Quando sarà l'ora</i> Cecilia Bellingardi, Mondadori |
| 1967 (1968): <i>A Swan in the Evening</i> | 1968: <i>Le cygne au crépuscule</i> Simone Saint-Clair, Plon | |
| 1976 (1976): <i>A Sea-Grape Tree</i> | 1978: <i>L'arbre de mer</i> Marie-Alyx Revellat, Plon | |

³ See Gustafson's bibliography (1959): while incomplete, it provides some idea of the early international editions of her works.

What might seem surprising about these Italian publications, considering the *risqué* content of the novels, is that they were published at all in a country that, from 1922 on, was governed by Mussolini's Fascist Party. The regime's apparently liberal position over publishing can be attributed to a number of factors: at least initially, they wanted to maintain the illusion of a degree of freedom of speech, with limitations usually imposed via "discrete channels and not openly through legislative measures" (Rundle 2000, 72); they realized that the publishing market was a lucrative one, and since most publishers were generally cooperative, they were reluctant to damage them with (further) restrictions; for a long time, literature was not perceived as being as influential as film and theatre: it was viewed as being mostly indulged in by the middle classes who tended to be supportive (or, at least, tolerant) of the regime; finally, there was also a stubborn feeling that Italian culture could hold its own with foreign products on merit and that the population was able to recognize and sponsor this quality.

This last point, however, was revealed to be little more than wishful thinking: "Throughout the thirties, Italy translated consistently more than any other country in the world" (Rundle 2000, 72). It turned out that the vast majority of these translations (mostly from English, but a large number also from French) were not restricted to an intellectual, middle-class but were rather of 'popular' literature: adventure novels, romantic fiction, the crime novels of Agatha Christie and Edgar Wallace, the comedy of P.G. Wodehouse, and the westerns of Zane Grey among the most popular. In these years, therefore, there was a significant discrepancy between the image projected by the regime and reality, and it is in this scenario that Lehmann's novels were being translated.

The text I want to look at in more detail is Lehmann's *The Weather in the Streets*, published in English in 1936. The book follows the story of Olivia Curtis, an upper-middle class woman, separated from her husband, and her relationship with the aristocratic Rollo Spencer, an unhappily married man. Olivia becomes pregnant, and, although she considers keeping the child – more a day-dream than an actual consideration – she goes about getting an illegal abortion, on her own, negotiating the fee, pawning a ring to pay for it herself and goes through with the procedure, helped, quite by chance, by her ex-husband. Olivia endures the ordeal all without the knowledge of Rollo, whose wife, in the meantime, is about to bear (him) a legitimate child. Although quite shocking at the time, the novel was testament to a new willingness among women authors to tackle hereto taboo subjects. As Lehmann was to say of Virginia Woolf, twenty years her senior: "I remember her tapping me on the shoulder at a party and saying, 'Remember, we won this for you' – meaning the freedom to

discuss sex without inhibition” (Lehmann 1985, 53). Olivia embodies the modern woman: she has studied at Cambridge, she drinks and smokes, lives independently and earns her own living. Society allows her to separate from her husband and live on her own, albeit in reduced financial circumstances.

The book was published in 1936 by Collins in London and Reynal and Hitchcock in New York. The same year, it was also selected by the American Literary Guild Book Club, who published more affordable editions of new books they felt were going to be popular. Still in 1936, the book appeared in France, as *Intempéries*, translated by Jean Talva, pseudonym of Marthe L'Évêque, with whom Lehmann enjoyed a great friendship and whose translations of her earlier works she greatly appreciated. These four separate editions – three in English, one in French – all published in 1936, are symptomatic of Lehmann's great popularity at the time. In Italy the book appeared two years later, in 1938, as *Tempo d'amore* (Time for Love), published by Mondadori, Italy's largest publishing company, in their prestigious Medusa series, dedicated to high quality foreign literature, and translated by Enrico Piceni, one of their senior editors. As Piceni remarked, “The *Medusa* series is not simply a set of volumes for pleasant reading but rather a documentary collection, we have decided to publish only the most faithful, unabridged translations” (Bonsaver 1998, 69)⁴, clearly equating fidelity to the unexpurgated source text with quality. As we shall see, this was not to be the case with *The Weather in the Streets*.

Unlike Lehmann's earlier novels, by 1938, there were now several reasons not to publish this book in Italy: the political situation had altered quite dramatically. While the press and cinema, as more popular forms of communication, had been censored from the early years of the regime, the first piece of fascist legislation specifically mentioning books was not passed until 1935: from then on, the *Ministry for Press and Propaganda* could confiscate any book they deemed offensive, prior to publication. The steady flow of translated books, therefore, began to falter, as both sides took measures: on the one hand, the regime could no longer turn a blind eye to the fact that most Italians were not reading mostly Italian books, and they also began to intervene more directly to maintain standards of 'morality', while the publishers, on the other hand, began to censor themselves pre-emptively to reduce the financial risk of having their books impounded. The turning of the screws also coincided with the signing of the Rome-

⁴ “La Medusa non è un semplice gruppo di volumi di lettura amena bensì una raccolta documentaria, abbiamo deciso di pubblicare soltanto traduzioni fedelissime ed integrali.” Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

Berlin Axis in 1936 and the increasingly repressive climate that led to the passing of the Racial Laws in 1938, effectively turning all Jews into non-citizens. Lehmann, with her Jewish ancestry, was published in December 1938 and somehow slipped through, but, tellingly, there were no further translations of her works in Italy until 1950.

A second reason for not publishing the book was the perceived scandalous nature of Lehmann's personal life: by the time the translation of *The Weather in the Streets* appeared, her second marriage to the Communist Wogan Phillips had broken down and he had left to join the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. The marriage was followed by affairs including one with the Marxist writer Goronwy Rees. Rosamond herself was making speeches at anti-Fascist rallies and, in 1937, for example, contributed to the pamphlet "*Authors Take Sides*", along with G.B. Shaw, H.G. Wells, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Ezra Pound and Vita Sackville West. The tone of her intervention would certainly not have been welcome in Italy: "Culture, which has been violently destroyed in Italy and Germany, is in mortal danger even here, even in England. Not only as an internationalist, but as an English writer, I must choose to bear my part in the defence of culture against Fascism" (Lehmann 1937, n.p.).

The most obvious reason, however, for banning Lehmann's book was its content: even in England, some readers found her work shocking, reacting to the amoral complexion of her fiction, the sexual freedom that the novels depicted and implicitly condoned. The perceived danger came from the fact that some readers saw the "adultery, abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism and cross-dressing [...] as an accepted part of the metropolitan milieu depicted" (Simmons 2011, 49). There is, however, a permanent tension in the novel: Olivia is constantly compared, and constantly compares herself, with her more 'conventional' sister, Kate – married with four children – and, just as constantly, she falls short. Her financial situation is also well below that usually afforded women of her social class. Ultimately, Olivia's problem is a woman's private issue that raises questions of moral transgression, social class and lack of control over reproduction. Despite all the newly-gained freedoms, it was still unthinkable for a middle-class woman to bring up a child, on her own, out of wedlock.

Herein lies the most notable difference with Italy. Under the fascist regime, the private sphere was subsumed by the public machine: from the age of six, children became part of a variety of fascist youth groups; sport was subject to collective organization; workers were enrolled into company clubs that regulated their free time and holidays; wedding rings were handed over to be melted down and finance colonial aspirations in Africa; to maintain the 'race', to breed the future citizens of

the glorious Italian empire, the state implemented paternalistic pronatalist measures, encouraging marriage and large families through subsidies, banning any promotion of contraception, criminalizing abortion, imposing a tax on male celibacy – the higher the salary and the longer the celibacy, the more one paid – with the money raised going to the National Organization for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood⁵.

This climate explains Mondadori's reader's report for *The Weather in the Streets*, advocating the publication of the book. It is a highly ambivalent document as, on the one hand, it praises Lehmann's literary qualities: "there is a consensus among critics the world over that Rosamond Lehmann is the greatest contemporary English writer" (Albonetti 1994, 399)⁶, while, on the other, criticizing its content, the "restless generation ... illegal relationships ... the horror of an impossible maternity" (Albonetti 1994, 400)⁷. Counterintuitively, it suggests that this very content is precisely why the book should be published: Olivia's desolate, childless outcome is to serve as a warning to Italian women to avoid going down the same path: "No woman who has read this tremendous, bleak book would ever want to run the risk run by Olivia" (Albonetti 1994, 400)⁸. The report is to be interpreted as a pre-emptive strike by the publishing company, a tactic to circumvent the censorship office. The authorities are reassured that the Italian translator has "suppressed" or "toned down" the rawest parts or anything that might be misinterpreted⁹, creating the paradoxical situation whereby the same publishing company claims, at once, that the prestigious *Medusa* translations are faithful and unabridged but also that any unacceptable passages have been deleted.

⁵ Founded in 1925, the Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia (ONMI) was a State organization set up to promote motherhood and increase the birthrate as part of Mussolini's 'Strength in Numbers' ideology ('il numero è potenza').

⁶ "Per consenso della critica di tutto il mondo Rosamond Lehmann è oggi la maggiore scrittrice d'Inghilterra."

⁷ "la sua irrequieta generazione... le relazioni illegali ... l'orrore della impossibile maternità".

⁸ "Nessuna donna che abbia letto questo libro nudo e terribile vorrà mai correre l'alea corsa da Olivia".

⁹ "If we add that the Italian translator has suppressed or toned down the parts that might have seemed a little raw or open to erroneous interpretation, we must conclude that *Tempo d'amore* not only cannot exert a negative moral or social influence or be construed as a bad example but that it perhaps ought to be published, as a warning, in a more popular series, rather than in the selective and difficult *Medusa* collection."

"Se si aggiunge che il traduttore italiano ha soppresso o attenuato i passaggi che potevano sembrare un po' crudi o prestarsi a errate interpretazioni, si deve concludere che *Tempo d'amore* non solo non può portare pregiudizio morale o sociale, o costituire cattivo esempio, ma che forse, anziché in una collezione da pubblico ristretto e difficile come "Medusa", dovrebbe esser pubblicato, ad ammonimento, in una collezione più popolare" (Albonetti 1994, 400).

It is appropriate, at this point, to analyze what happened to Lehmann's novel in its various printed editions and reflect on the notion of 'sameness', not only across different languages, but also across such different political and cultural contexts. When the book was first published in the UK, Collins insisted on the removal of the "powerful passage describing Olivia's ordeal on the cold linoleum of the bathroom floor" following her abortion (Pollard 2004, 90). There is no extant copy of Lehmann's original manuscript, but the version published in America, perhaps rather surprisingly, is integral: surprising because her American publishers had requested that the whole pregnancy and termination 'episode' be removed, "on the grounds that its inclusion might affect sales on the Ladies' lunch-club circuit!" (Tindall 1985, 77). Rather than any "startling explicitness, [it is] the uncompromising manner in which the nature of Olivia's predicament, her acute mental and physical distress, is described" that led the publishers to insist (Hastings 2002, 167). Lehmann stood her ground, before finally agreeing to make one significant half-page cut as well as some smaller alterations. Such was the hurry to publish the volume, however, that the cuts were never made to the American version, but only in the British edition. The following table, with the scene of Olivia's initial visit to the doctor who will carry out the procedure, contains the text from the two English-language editions as well as the French and Italian translations:

| 1936 – UK (Collins) <u>Underlined:</u> 1936 - USA (Reynal & Hitchcock) | 1936 – France (Plon) <u>Underlined:</u> text not included in UK edition | 1938 – Italy (Mondadori) |
|---|--|---|
| She got up. 'Friday at three.' | Elle se leva. - Vendredi à trois heures." | Si alzò. 'Venerdì alle tre.' |
| He, too, rose. He held out his hand; strong, plump, manipulative fingers with cushiony tips. | Il se leva aussi, et lui tendit la main, une main forte, charnue, aux doigts en pelote, une vraie main de masseur. | Anch'egli si alzò, e le tese la mano: mano forte, carnosa, coi polpastrelli sviluppati, vera mano da massaggiatore. |
| 'Is it painful?' she said. | - Est-ce très pénible? Demanda-t-elle. | |
| 'What a lot of worries!' He shook his head, chiding again paternally, half playful, still holding her hand. | - Comme vous vous tormentez!" Il hochà la tête, amicalement grondeur, de nouveau paternel, un peu badin. | |
| 'I'm not afraid. I only wanted to know.' | Ce n'est pas que j'ai peur. Mais je préfère savoir. | |

| 1936 – UK (Collins) <u>Underlined:</u> 1936 - USA (Reynal & Hitchcock) | 1936 – France (Plon) <u>Underlined:</u> text not included in UK edition | 1938 – Italy (Mondadori) |
|---|--|--|
| 'You needn't worry,' he said. <u>'You'll scarcely notice it. I assure you, Mrs Craig, you needn't anticipate anything disagreeable.</u> 'Don't think about it. | - Vous n'avez pas à vous faire de souci, dit-il. <u>Vous ne sentirez presque rien. Je vous affirme, Mrs Craig, que vous n'avez pas à redouter quoi que ce soit de désagréable.</u> Ne vous hypothésez pas trop sur vous. | |
| A few days taking it easy afterwards and your troubles will all be over.' | Quelques jours de précaution une fois la chose faite, et tous vos ennuis seront terminés. | |
| 'I'll be glad.' | - J'en serai bien contente. | |
| 'I'm sure you will.' He nodded, sympathetic, understanding. | - Certes, vous le serez." Il acquiesçait, plein de sympathie, de compréhension. | |
| 'Poor dear... If you ask me, Nature hasn't given women a square deal – I've always said so – not by any means a square deal, poor things.' | "Pauvre petite... si vous voulez que je vous dise, la Nature n'a pas fait la part juste aux femmes... je le dis toujours... elles sont mal partagées, les pauvres." | |
| He patted her shoulder. 'Now cheer up, Mrs Craig.' | Il lui tapotait affectueusement l'épaule. "Allons, allons, remetez-vous, Mrs Craig." | |
| My advice to you is: forget about yourself. Get hold of a pal and fix up something cheerful. What about a theatre – eh?' | Si j'ai un conseil à vous donner, distrayez-vous. Faites quelque chose d'amusant. Tenez, allez au théâtre avec une amie... qu'en dites-vous? | 'E un consiglio, signora Craig: non pensate a nulla, state allegra... Andate a teatro con qualche amica, per esempio...' |

We can observe the instability of the traditional source text: the US edition and the French translation contain the 'full' text while the UK edition has some cuts and the Italian translation has even more. Talva's French translation is unabridged presumably because she worked from the original manuscript and not the printed UK version, a common practice when, as here, ST and TT appear simultaneously or in quick succession.

The next table narrates the events straight after the procedure, that is never described directly. Here, again, the UK edition is more ‘reserved’ than the US and French versions while the Italian translation is the one that eliminates most:

| 1936 – UK (Collins) <u>Underlined:</u> 1936 - USA (Reynal & Hitchcock) | 1936 – France (Plon) <u>Underlined:</u> text not included in UK edition | 1938 – Italy (Mondadori) |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| “All right, Mrs Craig? <u>Pain gone?</u> ” | -Eh bien! Mrs Craig, <u>la douleur a disparu?</u> | “Andiamo bene, signora Craig?” |
| “Yes, thank you. <u>No pain now.</u> ” | Oui, merci. <u>Je ne souffre plus.</u> ” | “Sì, grazie,” |
| She smiled up at him faintly, meekly. His face loomed over her, broad and bland. The high-winged old-world collar carried on the motif of his pointed prominent ears. | Elle lui sourit faiblement, gentiment. Il penchait vers elle sa large face paterne. Les pointes de son faux col démodé faisaient ressortir ses oreilles pointues et saillantes. | |
| My deliverer. Your victim...here I lie. | Voici mon libérateur. Et moi, sa victime. | |
| “Bit shaky still, though.” | -Encore un peu tremblante, il me semble? | |
| He went away, came back with a glass. | Il s'éloigna, revint avec un verre plein. | |
| “Drink this.” She drank. It was sal volatile. | -Tenez, buvez ça.” Elle but. C'était une solution d'alcali volatil. | |
| “I might be sick.” | -Cela me rend un peu malade, dit-elle. | |
| He placed an enamel kidney bowl beside her chin; and soon she was sick. | Il lui plaça sous le menton une cuvette courbe, et elle ne tarda pas a vomir. | |
| “Tt-tt-tt...” Sympathetically he removed the bowl. | -Tt...tt...tt...” Plein de sympathie, il retira la cuvette. | |
| “Poor dear. You won't be troubled with this much longer.” | “Pauvre petite femme! voilà un ennui dont vous allez être débarrassée. | |
| She sat up [...] | Elle se redressa [...] | Ella si alzò a sedere [...] |

Rendering the ‘genealogy’ of the text even more complex is the fact that the Italian translation includes several references that would seem to indicate that it was carried out from the French rather than the original English: a commonplace practice

at the time, when French was more widely studied than English. In the table below, for example, the ST states that Olivia “went to bed and read *Pride and Prejudice*”. Talva expands this to ‘relut’ (reread) and the reiteration is carried over in Italian (‘rilesse’). The same extract also illustrates the more domesticating strategy adopted by Piceni, typical of translations carried out under fascism: the culturally specific references to Leicester Square and the Empire (cinema) have been eliminated in favour of a more generic ‘cinematografo’:

| 1936 – UK (Collins) <u>Underlined:</u> 1936 - USA (Reynal & Hitchcock) | 1936 – France (Plon) <u>Underlined:</u> text not included in UK edition | 1938 – Italy (Mondadori) |
|---|--|---|
| She went to bed and read <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . | Elle se mit au lit, et relut <i>Orgueil et Préjugé</i> . | Olivia si buttò sul letto e rilesse <i>Orgoglio e prevenzione</i> . |
| <u>About eight she got up again and walked round the room. No pain. Nothing. Is it a flop?... I don't know what to expect. Absolute certainty, he'd said. But supposing I'm the exception...? Just my luck.</u> | <u>Vers huit heures, elle se leva et fit le tour de la chambre. Aucune sensibilité. Rien. Est-ce loupé?. Je ne sais que croire. Une certitude absolue, a-t-il dit. Mais si par hasard j'étais une exception? Ça serait bien ma chance.</u> | Verso le otto si alzò, |
| <u>She</u> dressed and went out and took a bus to Leicester Square. | Elle s'habilla, sortit, et s'en alla en bus à Leicester Square. | si vesti e andò al cinematografo. |
| An hour or so of oblivion at the Empire, then all may be well. | Une ou deux heures d'oubli à l'Empire et tout ira bien. | Un paio d'ore di oblio e tutto andrà bene. |

The final table contains the episode that Collins insisted on cutting, but that survives in the American edition, a highly emotive scene narrated from Olivia's point of view. The British text maintains the initial statement ‘I'm having a miscarriage’ but fails to follow through with Olivia's interior monologue as she undergoes the ordeal. Even the French translation on one occasion alters the character's resolve, her control over her destiny: whereas in Lehmann's original, Olivia courageously declares ‘I won't die’ – a bold statement – in French it becomes the more passive ‘Je ne veux pas mourir’ (I don't want to die). The Italian translation expunges the whole scene and the reader is left to reconstruct everything for themselves:

| 1936 – UK (Collins) <u>Underlined:</u> 1936 - USA (Reynal & Hitchcock) | 1936 – France (Plon) <u>Underlined:</u> text not included in UK edition | 1938 – Italy (Mondadori) |
|---|--|--|
| She heard herself say clearly: | Elle s'entendit clairement répondre: | |
| "I'm having a miscarriage." | -Je suis en train de faire une fausse couche. | |
| "Shall I get a doctor?" | -Faut-il aller chercher un médecin? | "Olivia! Devo chiamare un medico?" |
| "Yes... Quick." | -Oui... et vite. | "Sì... Presto." |
| He went hurtling down the stairs. | Il se précipita en bas. | Egli si precipitò giù dalle scale. |
| She cried out, on a tag-end of breath: | Avec ce qui lui restait de souffle, elle cria: | Con quel pò di fiato che le rimaneva Olivia gli gridò dietro: |
| "Don't be long!" | -Ne soyez pas longtemps. | "Non indugiarti..." |
| He wouldn't have heard. | Il n'avait pas dû entendre. | Ma certo egli non poté udire. |
| <p><u>Alone. Must get down to the bathroom. I can get there... because I will.... She accomplished it, in one rigid flight. Don't lock the door... in case I die in here.... Mother, Kate, - oh, Kate!... Rollo!... "Don't tell them," I should have said to Ivor.... "Just say love, sorry...." I won't die. "Say to Rollo...."</u></p> <p><u>She died and presently came back to life lying on the pale blue linoleum. How cold, and the smell of oilcloth....She crawled out, up the stairs, on her hands and knees, reached the bed; crouched down beside it, her head buried against it, as if in an ecstasy of bedtime prayer.... Can't be found like this.... An ultimate effort heaved her on to the mattress, rolled her down flat, motionless, extinct, between the sheets.</u></p> | <p><u>Seule. Il faut pourtant que j'aile à la salle de bains. J'irai parce que je le veux. Tendue vers le but, elle y parvint, d'un élan. Ne pas verrouiller la porte... si j'allais mourir là!... Maman...Kate!...Oh! Kate!... Rollo Qu'on ne leur raconte pas ça...j'auras dû le recommander à Ivor... qu'on leur dise seulement que je les aime, que j'ai du chagrin...Je ne veux pas mourir... qu'on dise à Rollo...</u></p> <p><u>Elle mourut, et bientôt après revint à la vie, sur le linoléum bleu pale de la salle de bains. Que c'était froid! Oh! Cette odeur de toile cirée... Elle se traîna dehors, le long de l'escalier, sur les mains et sur les genoux, atteignit sa chambre, se blottit contre le lit, la tête enfouie dans le drap, comme on fait dans l'abandon total de la prière... Mais il ne faut pas qu'on me trouve comme ça... Un suprême effort la haussa sur son matelas; elle roula, sans mouvement, exténuée, entre les draps.</u></p> | |
| From some unknown level deeper than sleep she floated up, and saw Ivor looking down at her. | D'une profondeur inconnue, plus lointaine que le sommeil, elle remonta peu à peu, et vit Ivor qui la regardait. | Da qualche sconosciuta profondità, più profonda del sonno, ella riemerse lentamente e vide Ivor che la guardava. |

As illustrated, there are such glaring disparities between these versions that it becomes redundant to evaluate them according to any concept of 'sameness', limiting our investigation to searching out similarity and likeness. I would suggest that it is far more fruitful to analyze the links between the social, political and economic context and the texts being produced. The tension between what is socially acceptable and what is not lies at the heart of Rosamond Lehmann's *The Weather in the Streets*: although Olivia can conduct an affair with a married man, she cannot tell him that she is pregnant; she can lead an independent life but she cannot be a single mother. That same tension – what one community is willing to tolerate or not – informs the various versions and translations, just as the translations inform our understanding of the context. Rather than dismissing the Italian translation as overly conservative and 'censored', it might even be argued that, considering the historical and political context in which it was published, it is the most daring and controversial of all, the one most at odds with its contemporary polysystem. Another useful reflection would be to consider how the translation would be different if carried out today, although, having said that, it is surely somewhat surprising that the only English version available at present, even after Lehmann's 'revival' by Virago Press in the 1980s, is the edited version which first appeared in the UK and not the integral US text.

Returning to Pym's statement that the translator's output 'varies according to their cultural and historical position' (Pym 2014, 87), it is important to emphasize that translation production does not occur within a vacuum. As is the case in the example investigated above, social norms and political ideologies, alongside economic concerns, are all factors in shaping translations as cultural products, products that can only exist within a commercial chain. To this must be added fluctuating aesthetic models and trends in translation strategy, resulting in further variation from one version to the next. The political and social contexts determine diversity, a diversity to be celebrated rather than castigated, as it tells us more about individual cultures and histories than any 'faithful' adherence to the source text ever will.

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JOKIO SKIRTUMO? „JAUTRIŲ“ TEKSTŲ VERTIMAS

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S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje analizuojami keturi skirtingi Rosamondos Lehmann romano *The Weather in the Streets*, (1936) vertimai bendrame jos literatūrinio palikimo kontekste ir atsižvelgiant į politinę ir socialinę situaciją XX amžiaus 4-ajame dešimtmetyje. Romanas buvo išleistas beveik tuo pat metu trijose šalyse: JK, JAV ir Prancūzijoje, o 1938 m. pasirodė ir vertimas į italų kalbą. Leidyklos prašymu Lehmann sutiko išbraukti gana daug teksto vietų, visų pirma tas, kuriose buvo kalbama apie pagrindinės veikėjos nelegalų abortą. Šios vietos išbrauktos ir iš britų leidimo, tačiau amerikiečių leidimo variante išliko. Prancūzijoje išleistas vertimas buvo atliktas iš necenzūruoto amerikietiškojo teksto, todėl visiškai atitinka šį leidimą, o vertimas į italų kalbą, kuris buvo iš anksto cenzūruotas vertėjo ir (arba) leidėjo, yra labiausiai paveiktas tekstas iš visų keturių. Daroma išvada, kad norint nustatyti originalo ir vertimo teksto santykį (jų panašumą ar skirtingumą) vietoj įprastos gretinamosios analizės tinkamesnis būdas yra išsiaiškinti, kokį vaidmenį tam tikru istoriniu laikotarpiu vaidino socialinės normos ir ideologiniai įsitikinimai pasirenkant vertimo strategiją ir suvokiant išverstą tekstą.