

本文章已註冊DOI數位物件識別碼

▶ Text That Is Becoming: A Deleuzian Understanding of the Concept of Translation

生成中的文本：由德勒茲角度思索翻譯概念

doi:10.6153/2010.24.01

NTU Studies in Language and Literature, (24), 2010

作者/Author：陳佩筠(Pei-Yun Chen)

頁數/Page：1-23

出版日期/Publication Date：2010/12

引用本篇文獻時，請提供DOI資訊，並透過DOI永久網址取得最正確的書目資訊。

To cite this Article, please include the DOI name in your reference data.

請使用本篇文獻DOI永久網址進行連結:

To link to this Article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6153/2010.24.01>



DOI Enhanced

DOI是數位物件識別碼（Digital Object Identifier, DOI）的簡稱，是這篇文章在網路上的唯一識別碼，用於永久連結及引用該篇文章。

若想得知更多DOI使用資訊，

請參考 <http://doi.airiti.com>

For more information,

Please see: <http://doi.airiti.com>

請往下捲動至下一頁，開始閱讀本篇文獻

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE



Text That Is Becoming: A Deleuzian Understanding of the Concept of Translation

Pei-yun Chen

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Tamkang University

ABSTRACT

This paper begins with a brief review of the development of contemporary translation theory and indicates that the impasse of the conceptual thinking about translation is situated in the impossible conciliation between hierarchical and horizontal structures of translation. Departing from this impasse, this paper suggests understanding the concept of translation in terms of Deleuze's difference and repetition, and several relevant Deleuzian concepts, such as simulacrum, the virtual-actual relation, and becoming, are also employed.

The second part of this paper takes Borges's story "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" as an example to explore the notion of repetition and its connection to translation. The main argument is: what can be translated does not exist prior to its translation. Translation makes what can be translated show itself in translation. Whereas translation is understood as simulacrum, it is no longer the reproduction of a text that already existed; rather, translation is set in motion as it actualizes a virtual text. Menard's translation, the most exact, the strictest repetition, sets a virtual text in motion. Virtual text is not a text that already existed, but a text that is becoming. If translation is essentially involved with translating act, any translating act should make the text act, making it carry out immediate acts. This paper proposes that creating simulacra is an affirmative translating act that sets the text in becoming.

Keywords: translation, simulacrum, Borges, Deleuze, difference and repetition, the virtual and the actual

生成中的文本：由德勒茲角度思索翻譯概念

陳佩筠

淡江大學英文學系助理教授

摘 要

本文藉由簡短回顧當代翻譯理論的發展，指出關於翻譯概念之思考的困境，在於無法在翻譯的上下支配結構與平行差異兩種思維之間取得任何妥協。本文以擺脫這個困境為出發點，試圖從德勒茲差異與重覆的觀點來理解翻譯概念，同時參考德勒茲哲學中如擬象、虛擬與實在的關係、以及生成等概念。

本文的第二部份則以波赫斯的短篇故事〈吉訶德的作者皮埃爾·曼納德〉為例，探討重覆的觀念及其與翻譯的關係。我的主要論點在於：唯有經由翻譯行動，才能確知什麼可翻譯。也就是說，翻譯使那可翻譯者展現其自身。當我們將翻譯理解為擬象時，便不是將其視為某既有文本的複製；應該反過來說，翻譯在實在化某虛擬文本時啟動。曼納德的翻譯，作為最精確、最嚴謹的重覆，使一個虛擬文本動起來。虛擬文本不是既存文本，而是生成中的文本。如果翻譯的概念必然關乎翻譯行動，則任何翻譯應該促動文本展開立即而直接的行動。本文提出，擬象的創生乃是帶有肯定意味的翻譯行動，並使文本不斷生成。

關鍵詞：翻譯、擬象、波赫斯、德勒茲、差異與重覆、虛擬與實在

Text That Is Becoming: A Deleuzian Understanding of the Concept of Translation

Pei-yun Chen

The Impasse of Conceptual Thinking about Translation

It is fair to say that the term “translation studies” nowadays signifies something much different than it did for the past few decades. Along with the rise of postmodernism, post-structuralism, postcolonialism, feminism, cultural studies, and perhaps also together with rapid globalization, the theoretical discourses on translation practices and the concept of translation as such have turned to a noisy field where all voices are eager to be heard and the potentiality of translation studies is not yet exhausted. Multiple dimensions on the discussions in the field of translation have shown that the issue of translation is on fire. As Kathleen Davis observes, contemporary translation theorists sensitive to the trend of deconstruction pay special attention to the indeterminate meaning of words or texts, since the function of every signifier is dependent on various context. Due to the dynamic traits of text, contemporary translation scholars have led “to use terms traditionally applied to translation in the conventional sense ... in order to discuss topics such as gender, ethnicity, and sexuality” (Davis 25). In addition to Derrida, who devotes his life-long project to the role of writing in the Western metaphysical tradition and suggests insightful ways to rethink about the nature of translation, some remarkable examples are such as, among others, Homi Bhabha, who employs “translation” in the issue of identity for colonized people, and Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, who argues that women are translations under male-made language. Especially in the field of post-colonialism, the issue of translation is highlighted due to the fact that the spread of imperialism cannot succeed without translation. Translation plays a crucial part at the age of colonialism and translation practices are involved with the asymmetrical power relation between the colonized and the dominant. The most insightful analysis concerning the issue of translation in terms of post-colonial and post-structural perspectives is perhaps Niranjana’s *Siting Translation*. In this book Niranjana argues that the translation is a site for colonialism and is therefore necessarily political. The political dimension of translation is brought up and examined in postcolonial discourses; this tendency is also

apparent in Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility*, Spivak's "The Politics of Translation," Tymocako and Gentzler's *Translation and Power* and Naoki Sakai's *Translation and Subjectivity*.

It seems that the field of translation studies is revived by the implement of literary theories; nevertheless, the conceptual thinking about the idea of "translation" basically remains imprisoned under two principles that are concluded in Benjamin's well-known essay "The Task of the Translator": "the traditional concepts in any discussion of translation are fidelity and license—the freedom to give a faithful reproduction of the sense and, in its service, fidelity to the word" (259)¹. Fidelity and license, these two principles still dominate discussions on translation due to the fact that most debates amongst translation studies are usually concerned with whether translation brings forth identity to the original or difference from its source. If it is identity, the principle of fidelity is necessarily the criteria for translation; if difference, then, freedom for translation is granted. From the traditional perspective, the principle of fidelity is indispensable insofar as the very assumption of translation is that translation bears the task to reproduce and render meanings from the original in a foreign tongue. Under such assumption, it can be inquired, as Benjamin puts it, what if there is a theory that "strives to find, in a translation, something *other than* reproduction of meaning"? And, "what can fidelity really do for the rendering of meaning?" (*Ibid.*, italics added) In other words, when the reproduction of meaning as the task of translation is put into question, another way to think about the nature of translation needs to be sought. The principle of fidelity for translation can trace its foundation from the Bible translations. It is then not surprising, in the case of translations of Holy Scriptures, the principle of fidelity is legitimate since the Bible contains the intrinsic universality of its meaning; it is not meant to be interpreted by mankind and therefore indifferent to the bifurcations of linguistic and cultural systems. Symbolic moments from the Bible, such as the Fall or Babel, are recognized as a move to linguistic confusion from the Absolute and thus engender necessity of translation.² Under this context the ultimate task of translation remains instrumental, that is, to convey God's words in human languages. In this sense, translation is reduced to imperfect representation of the original, the Absolute, namely, God's words. Translation as representation

¹ Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings Vol. I*.

² The connection between the Absolute and translation is made by Andrew Benjamin in the essay "The Absolute as Translatability: Working through Walter Benjamin on Language," collected in *Walter Benjamin and Romanticism*.

or secondary to the original is not being challenged until the rise of deconstruction. One of the main aims of deconstruction is to call into question the tradition of metaphysics; the hierarchical relationship between Idea and representation is therefore problematized. What differentiates the Bible translations and translations of literary texts is whether or not there exists the universality of meaning.

The universality of meaning is challenged when the notion of difference is brought into play. Saussure's claiming that language is by nature difference opens a fresh way to meditate on the issue of linguistic sense: the determination of any meaning must depend on context rather than intrinsic universality. Barthes first makes it clear that the authorship of text is always already problematic and the notion of intertextuality disturbs the assumption of fixed meaning in any given text. The dynamics of text is based upon both readership and historical process. The role of the author is turned upside down in Barthes's discourses. In the essay "The Death of the Author", Barthes argues that the role of the reader is by no means secondary, stating that "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. ... [T]he birth of the reader must be at the cost of the Author" (148)³ The author is no longer the origin of the text; in the process of producing the text, the reader no longer plays a passive role. The relationship between author and reader is brought up and such consideration is especially crucial in the determination of the sense of the text. Insofar as the sense of the text is indeterminate, or, to put another way, if the author / reader relation can neither be simplified as a hierarchical structure (which means, the author somewhat signifies the father of the text and the passive reader can only try to understand faithfully what the father means), nor a linear relation (that is, the author is preceding or exceeding the writing and the reader is a late-comer), the principle of fidelity for translation loses its legitimacy since the text in its source language always already differentiates itself and therefore the reference of translation varies within each reading.

Rethinking or subverting the author/ reader relation is meaningful when considering in an analogous way the relationship between the original and its

³ Concerning the reader/author relation, two essays by Barthes must be mentioned. One is "The Death of the Author" (1977), in which Barthes directly points out that meanings of any given text are not determined by the author, but the reader. In the essay "From Work to Text," the idea of intertextuality is elaborated and it is meant to disturb the authorship of the text. Barthes states: "Every text, being itself the intertext of another text, belongs to the intertextual, which must not be confused with a text's origins.... The quotations from which a text is constructed are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without quotation marks" (77).

translation. What makes sense to the text and who determines the meaning? The notion of difference multiplies possible answers to the above questions. The concepts of text and context declared by deconstructionists are crucial for philosophy of difference and Derrida elaborates it to the extreme as to state that “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*” (there is nothing outside the text). Meaning is a contextual event; its existence cannot be extracted from the context. Derrida’s preeminent notion of *différance*, differing and deferring, modifies traditional understanding of “origin”—origin can never be an absolute point *ex nihilo*; origin is always already a difference. On the aspect of translation studies, when the deconstructionists’ subversive understanding of origin is introduced, the original-translation relation is open to questions. If the determination of meaning necessarily depends on context, historical circumstances, along with social, linguistic, and cultural conditions, also need to be taken into consideration in reading activity. Plurivocality liberates translation from the hierarchical structure where the original text in source language dominates the privileged position. Since translation brings infinite possibilities of difference, there exists no transcendental or preceding “origin” other than the text itself. The original is pulled down on the same plane with translation; the relationship between them is turned horizontal. Translation emphasizes difference over identity; in this sense the principle of license replaces that of fidelity as the criteria of translation.

A brief review of debates amongst translation studies stated above seems reflect impossible conciliation between hierarchical and horizontal structures of translation. By “hierarchical”, I mean that translation is regarded as representation of the original; hence translation is regulated under the principle of fidelity. By “horizontal”, I mean that inspired by deconstruction, translation is celebrated by its bringing about infinite possibilities of interpretations, and meanings of any given text differ and defer infinitely. No matter what is anticipated from translation, be it identity or difference, insofar as the flux of meaning remains indefinite, and insofar as any translation practice is not divorced from decisions made by human beings, such debates continuously appear unsettled. It is precisely at this point the importance of the notion of translation ethics (i.e., responsibility of the translator) is sharpened. To turn the fidelity/ infidelity criteria into the issue of ethics reaffirms the collapse of eternal “truth” or the unity of meaning. Perhaps it also discloses our lost faith on the possible revelation of totality, the Absolute, or even the justice. To a considerable extent, it can be said that the concern of translation ethics reveals our inability of trusting translations and translators under

post-colonial circumstances. Emphasis on responsibility of translators exposes incommensurability and asymmetry of different linguistic systems that necessarily happen in translation, and there must be power relation, perhaps also manipulation, involved. Liberating translation from certain social norms or asymmetrical power relation does not effectively provide a persuasive solution to the puzzles that translation provokes, exactly because the principles for the ethics of translation are also indeterminate.⁴

Still, we must ask: what can be done with the impasse of the conceptual thinking about translation? What other ways can be thought in the issue of translation that is so weary, so frustrated, and at the same time so aggressive, so unquiet? Is it possible to seek a “fair” way to ponder the concept of translation, a “fair” way to understand “otherness” which is implied in translation while this otherness is not defined by exclusion? This question can be put in another way: is translation meant to affirm otherness or to repeat oneself? Traditionally this question is expressed as a dilemma of reader-oriented or non-reader oriented translation. This dilemma cannot be perfectly solved because the border of translation is difficult to set. What is legitimate in translation? What should be included (and at the same time excluded from) in translation? These questions in turn challenge the ethics of translation. Only when the border of translation is clearly defined can the principles for the ethics of translation be settled.

The problems of translation ethics demonstrate the insufficiency of the two principles of translation—fidelity and freedom. Debates on what translation should evoke actually manifest how thought struggles with its realization. In other words, it is a struggle between the abstract concept and the realization, the theoretical and the pragmatic. The polarization of conceptual discussions on translation calls for alternative ways of thinking. The attempt of this paper is to pursue, borrowing Deleuze’s term in its literal sense, a “line of flight” for conceptual thinking of translation, even though any complete and well-established brand-new translation theory can not be promised at any rate. Given that “translation” is fundamentally a relational concept, the relationship between the original and translation must be carefully reconsidered for thoughtful reflections upon the concept of translation. Deleuze’s notion of difference and repetition, along with the notion of simulacrum, shed new light

⁴ Regarding the ethics of translation, most contributions are made by deconstruction translation theorists, such as Lawrence Venuti (*The Scandals of Translation* 1998), Edwin Gentzler (*Contemporary Translation Theories* 1993), Rosemary Arrojo (“Fidelity and Gendered Translation” 1994), and Kathleen Davis (*Deconstruction and Translation* 2001).

on considerations of model-copy as well as the original-translation relationship. Nowhere in Deleuze's discourses the issue of translation is directly pointed out, but his pondering upon difference and repetition might provide a significant possibility for the conceptual thinking of translation.

Simulacrum — Difference and Repetition in Translation

Difference and repetition, these two concepts might best illustrate the characteristics of translation. Just as translation, difference and repetition must be involved with otherness; otherness does not necessarily refer to something/ someone outside or alien, but signifies a necessary relation. Put simply, difference, repetition, and translation, all of these concepts are concerned with "relation." To think these concepts is to understand certain relations. Nevertheless, relations to be thought in repetition, difference, and translation appear challenging in the sense that the ways we ponder relations are traditionally constituted by principles of representation, resemblance, contradiction, comparison, or negation. These principles presuppose that the relations signified by difference, repetition, or translation are based upon at least two objects. Deleuze, however, argues that difference is not necessarily to be understood as difference (as well as repetition) between objects, but in one, in itself, as a double. In the preface of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze makes it clear that the relationship between the original work and its commentaries (and maybe it is also true to the original and its translation) refers to a double existence:

Commentaries in the history of philosophy should represent a kind of slow motion, a congelation or immobilization of the text: *not only* of the text to which they relate, *but also* of the text in which they are inserted—so much so that they have a double existence and a corresponding ideal: the pure repetition of the former text and the present text *in one another*. It is in order to approach this double existence that we have sometimes had to integrate historical notes into the present text. (XXII, emphasis original)

The original and its commentaries, as well as its translations, interpretations, antecedents, and precursors, should not be regarded as distinguishable objects; they are different actualizations of the same text. It needs to be emphasized that "text" here does not refer to something existing *a priori*; it will be more

appropriate to consider “text” as something becoming. If text is understood in terms of the fold, which means, to take translation, commentaries, and antecedents as a process of folding and unfolding (in this sense, text is becoming), the double existence of difference and repetition is no longer enigmatic. The notion of the “fold” indicates the relation of inside and outside; inside could be outside, and vice versa. It overturns conventional thinking of the original-translation relation. The logic of the fold is outlined by Deleuze in his readings of other philosophers; as Lambert observes, the relationship enacted between the original and its commentary “where the act of unfolding, which is often given as the metaphor of interpretation, cannot be opposed as contrary to the gesture of folding.” Therefore the interior and the exterior “are not contraries, but rather, are continuous” (XII)⁵ It is crucial to bring up the connection between the process of folding and unfolding and the concept of repetition. Repetition does not necessarily mean identical reproduction of a certain object; as repetition happens in one object, it has to do with the process of folding and unfolding. Based on this reasoning, activities (of writing, reading, translating, commenting, etc.) concerning one text could be understood as different manners of folding and unfolding of that text. This point of view is demonstrated in Lambert’s quoting Deleuze’s own statement in *The Fold*: “Reading does not consist in concluding from the idea of a preceding condition the idea of the following condition, but in grasping the effort or tendency by which the following condition itself ensues from the preceding ‘by means of a natural force’” (Lambert, *Ibid.*; Deleuze, *The Fold* 72). Reading, being not representation of any preceding text, involves a notion of repetition, but is by no means secondary.

It is not unusual to state that translation, in a sense, is repetition of the original in another tongue, which generates difference. In a rough way, translation is considered as repetition with difference. But such understanding of difference and repetition can hardly be satisfactory in so far as we cannot perfectly explain to what extent difference in translation is legitimate and what is, or should be, repeated in translation. Under this circumstance, translation as repetition of the original is subject to the principle of representation, which means, the text in translation resembles that in the source language—the original text is never completely repeated in its translation. But Deleuze argues, in his profound book *Difference and Repetition*, repetition is against similarity and equivalence; in this sense, repetition is different from

⁵ See: Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, “Preface—on the Art of Commentary.”

resemblance. He states: “Repetition can always be ‘represented’ as extreme resemblance or perfect equivalence, but the fact that one can pass by degrees from one thing to another does not prevent their being different in kind” (2).⁶ Furthermore, repetition is a transgression inasmuch as it is “against the similar form and the equivalent content of law” (*Ibid.*). Repetition is conventionally understood in terms of identity, but in corporeal sense, identity is usually realized through equivalent substitution; nevertheless, any form of substitution can never achieve identity. To better understand why repetition is a transgression, why repetition “denounces its nominal or general character in favor of a more profound and more artistic reality” (*DR* 3), some of Borges’s short stories provide the most distinctive illustrations for us. We have every reason to believe that Borges is captive to the notion of repetition. His interest in repetition usually comes along with his mediations on history, and this tendency can be found in stories (and some non-fiction essays), such as, to mention only few, “The Library of Babel,” “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*,” and “A New Refutation of Time.” His concern with history can be traced from his distinctive ways of ruminating time and space; the most apparent metaphor that he constantly uses to discuss time / space relation is labyrinth. The labyrinth metaphor certainly not only pinpoints the complex inter-working of time and space; it also has to do with language. Obvious examples concerning labyrinth and language are “Death and Compass” and his most celebrated story “The Garden of Forking Paths.” To elaborate Borges’s thought on repetition is with the goal of drawing out the connection between repetition and translation. Borges is one of the most important figure in postmodern theories; as a writer and a translator, Borges’s contributions to translation studies are preeminent.⁷

⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. Hereafter referred as *DR*. *The Logic of Sense* is abbreviated to *LS*.

⁷ George Steiner in his influential book *After Babel* points out that Borges’s “Pierre Menard” is “the most acute, most concentrated commentary anyone has offered on the business of translation” (73). Rosemary Arrojo in the essay “Translation, Transference, and the Attraction to Otherness—Borges, Menard, Whitman” also admires Borges’s contribution to translation studies, stating that: “Borges has left us some of the most original and insightful ideas on the implications of translation for literature and on the relationships that are generally established between translators and authors” (31). Two book-long projects pay special attention to the interaction of Borges’s writing and translation; they are: Efrain Kristal’s *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation* (2002) and Sergio Gabriel Waisman’s *Borges and Translation: The Irreverence of the Periphery* (2005). Borges’s own essay “The Translators of the Thousand and One Night” is constantly collected in some influential anthologies of translation studies, for example, Lawrence Venuti’s *The Translation Studies Reader* (2004).

Borges is a pioneer on the issue of translation when he takes pains to show us that translation is not in any sense secondary to the original. For Borges, any form of writing, such as translation and commentary, is a form of rewriting, an endless activity. Borges's favoring activities of rewriting and translation could be considered as his response to Spanish literary tradition, which is displayed in "The Argentine Writer and Tradition." When asked, "what is Argentine tradition," when this question is usually understood as a colonial combat against Eurocentricism, Borges answers without any hesitation: "I believe that our tradition is the whole of Western culture, and I also believe that we [Argentines] have a right to this tradition, a greater right than that which the inhabitants of one Western nation or another may have" (*Non-Fictions* 426). This statement exposes Borges's belief that any Argentine writer is not subject to a privileged Eurocentric position, but rather, writers from non-Western nations can perform an inner innovating power to so-called Western culture. Understood in this manner, it makes sense for Borges to challenge the privileged position of the "original." As Gregg Lambert points out, for a post-colonial writer, like Borges, who has "entered into the field of culture too late, due to some historical accident or political fatality,"⁸ the role of translator/ commenter/ reader is even more important than the author/ the original.⁹

The blurred boundary between the translation and the original calls forth the notion of simulacrum. It is then worthwhile to clarify and scrutinize Borges's and Deleuze's discourses on simulacrum, which have to do with difference and repetition. Simulacrum is not copy or image; at least it is not referring to Platonic notion of copy. Putting it another way, simulacrum is bad

⁸ Lambert's argument points out a superior position of post-colonial writers—it is exactly they are being "second" they are superior. The following quote explains this argument: "[...] we should not underestimate its importance for the situation of the post-colonial writer in relation to the literature of the West, and those who have entered into the field of culture too late, due to some historical accident or political fatality. However, for Borges, this subject occupies the privileged position of being the 'second.' This is why Borges finds the representatives of this position less in the personage of the author than in the figures of the critical reader, the scholar or the baroque detective—that is, those figures who always arrive on the scene of knowledge second and who are, for that reason, superior to the author (in the case of the book) or the criminal (in the case of crime)" (81).

⁹ In "An Autobiographical Essay", Borges's tendency to privilege the "second" over the "first" (or the "original") is put in a short childhood memory: "at some point, my father's library was broken up, and when I read the *Quixote* in another edition [the original Spanish edition] I had a feeling that it wasn't the real *Quixote*. Later, I had a friend get me the Garnier [English version], with the same steel engravings, the same footnotes, and also the same errata. All those things form part of the book for me: this I consider the real *Quixote*" (25).

copy or false reflection in Platonic sense; it does not resemble the Idea. Due to its non-resemblance, as Carsten Henrik argues, simulacrum is dangerous because it does not “lead thought to the ideal essence of things, but on the contrary bear witness to the existence of another way of thinking rather than the one sanctioned by the inner resemblances between copies and idea” (164).¹⁰ Moreover, simulacrum “eludes the action of the Idea [the Platonic Idea as Essence] as it contests both model and copy at once” (*LS 2*). Translation, a distinctive activity depicted in Borges’s writing, can be well associated with simulacrum if translation is not reduced to resemblance to the original or is not regarded as something distinguishable from the original.¹¹

“Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*” illustrates an exemplary caricature of translator. Pierre Menard, a French man of letters, “dedicated nights ‘lit by midnight oil’ to repeating in a foreign tongue a book that already existed” (*Fictions* 95). Menard did not intend to copy Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. He wanted to compose “the *Quixote*,” and, “his admirable ambition was to produce a number of pages which coincided—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes” (91). In the first sight, this story seems to ridicule “the ideal translation,” that is, a translation absolutely faithful to the original. Concerning this point, George Steiner commends that “any genuine act of translation is, in one regard at least, a transparent absurdity, an endeavour to go backwards up the escalator of time and to re-enact voluntarily what was a contingent motion of spirit” (75). The task that Menard undertook creates comic effects yet it is by no means absurd. It is not absurd precisely because repetition is not simply inconceivable. From the reader-response perspective, identical repetition is indeed impossible, since every reader would not have the same response to the same text. In “Pierre Menard”, Borges also demonstrates the various readings of Menard’s *Quixote*, such as: “Mme. Bachelier sees in them [Pierre Menard’s *Quixote*] an admirable (typical) subordination of the author to the psychology of the hero; others (lacking all perspicacity) see them as a transcription of the *Quixote*; the baroness de Bacours, as influenced by Nietzsche” (*Fictions* 93). Certainly various

¹⁰ See: Meiner, “Deleuze and the Question of Style,” 164.

¹¹ John Johnston in the essay “Translation as Simulacrum” also proposes to consider “translation as a simulacrum, not in the Platonic sense of a bad copy or image,” but “in the sense following the ‘overturning of Platonism’ elaborated by Gilles Deleuze” (48). I share the same opinion with Johnston on translation as simulacrum in Deleuzian sense; what differentiates my argument from Johnston’s is that I put more emphasis on Deleuze’s difference and repetition to approach the notion of simulacrum whereas Johnston concerns the becoming of language. See: *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, 48.

various viewpoints offered by interpreters seem to disrupt possibility of repetition, but the notion of repetition can be thought in another direction. Interpretations made by readers are truly various and can never be exhausted. If we take interpretations of any given text as parts of the text itself, repetition is not in the sense of repetition of divergent interpretations. After all, interpretations are bound to the text. Or, to put the other way round, text is becoming with explications (text explicates with explications); insofar as the text and its interpretations are mutually dependent, they are not distinguishable objects. To repeat a text already existing and a text created spontaneously (“The *Qui-xote* is a contingent work; the *Quixote* is not necessary.”)¹² is an action (explicating act) rather than a passive bare repetition. Menard’s re-rewriting is not to resemble Cervantes’s *Quixote*; his translating performance is to pursue a true “simulacrum.”

Readers of Borges’s works are familiar with his suspicious attitude towards the “origin,” his questioning the legitimacy of so-called origin. Readers should also bear in mind that *Don Quixote* with the signature of Miguel de Cervantes is already a translated text—perhaps this is also the reason that Menard’s subterranean production includes the ninth chapter. (“This work [Menard’s rewriting of *Don Quixote*], perhaps the most significant writing of our time, consists of the ninth and thirty-eight chapters of Part I of *Don Quixote* and fragment of Chapter XXII.”)¹³ In this chapter, the author describes how he learns the history of the chevalier Don Quixote: the story is narrated through a boy, a bilingual speaker of Spanish and Arabic, who sells old notebooks. The plots of *Don Quixote* are not created by Cervantes, but learned from some old notebooks written by an “Arabic historian” and translated by an anonymous translator:

[...] I understood at once that these old notebooks contained the history of Don Quixote. Having made this realization, I quickly asked him to read from the very beginning, which he did, making a rapid translation from Arabic into Spanish. ... He promised to translate carefully and well, using no more words than absolutely necessary. ... in little more than a month and a half he translated everything, exactly as it’s told here. (Cervantes 51-52)

¹² Borges, *Fictions* 92.

¹³ *Ibid.* 90.

If Cervantes's writing is pictured as a translation, then Menard's rewriting, a translation of translation. Menard's translation is nevertheless no less real than Cervantes's. On the relation of the original and its translation, Borges seems privilege the "second" over the "first," saying that "The Cervantes texts and the Menard text are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer"(94). This statement leads us back to Deleuze's notion of simulacrum. Discussions on Deleuze's simulacrum cannot be complete without relating it to "pure becoming." In other words, simulacrum is a site for becoming: it denies the distinction between model and copy because the concept of simulacrum does not follow the logic of representation. In the essay "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," one can find Deleuze's explications of the notion of simulacrum. Simulacrum, in Deleuze's own words, is "not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction" (*LS* 262-63). In this sense, simulacrum, rid of the determinations of the original and the copy, well corresponds Menard's writing project. As mentioned, simulacrum is a site for becoming precisely because it subverts the distinction between the original and the copy. This distinction is recognizable in the traditional sense precisely because such distinction is based upon well-defined identity.

The concept of simulacrum is the inseparability of difference and repetition, which is against the logic of identity. As James Williams puts it, "repetition, understood as the variation of things that cannot be identified in actual things, always accompanies difference, understood as a variation that does not depend on identity" (Williams 28). The concept of simulacrum as the site for becoming can be understood in terms of the relation of the virtual and the actual, which is also a recurring theme throughout the whole project of *Difference and Repetition*. One point concerning the virtual-actual relation, among others, shall be emphasized in order to make clear why this relation is strongly connected to simulacrum; that is, the virtual and the actual are *reciprocally determined*. In a somewhat more concrete way, Williams explains the virtual-actual relation by virtue of the inter-relation of actual things and virtual Ideas.¹⁴ This relation is by no means understood as that of representa-

¹⁴ In a short essay "The Actual and the Virtual" (collected in *Dialogues II*), Deleuze claims that "... hence, there is coalescence and division, or rather oscillation, a perpetual exchange between the actual object and its virtual image: the virtual image never stops becoming actual. ... The actual and the virtual coexist, and enter into a tight circuit which we are continually retracing from one to the other" (150). Similar statement can be found in *Bergsonism*, in which Deleuze states: "To be more precise, it is the virtual insofar as it is actualized; in the course of being actualized, it is in-

tion and Idea in Platonic sense. But rather, Williams states, “actual things are set in motion as they express Ideas” (164). In other words, insofar as the virtual and the actual are reciprocally determined, wherever the actual expresses the virtual, the virtual is in movement while the actual is set in motion as well. From here, one may sense that the key point of Deleuze’s argument on the virtual and the actual is “movement”, or, in other term, “becoming”, which also corresponds to the “overcoming of philosophy” that Deleuze pursues. In characterizing Nietzsche’s and Kierkegaard’s philosophy, Deleuze also conveys his own concern, stating that “they [Nietzsche and Kierkegaard] want to put metaphysics in motion, in action”, and they also want to “make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts” (*DR* 8). For Deleuze, such intention is an objection to Hegelian dialectical logic and “it is a question of producing within the work a *movement* capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation ...” (*Ibid.*, emphasis added). The reconsideration of the concept of translation proposed in this paper shares the same attempt with Deleuze’s alternative lineage to the history of philosophy, that is, an objection to dialectical logic of negation (false movement) and a critique of representation. “Becoming” is possible insofar as there exists no origin with fixed identity, but this does not mean that there is no origin in Deleuzian sense. In terms of translation, it would be more appropriate to say that the original is set in motion while expressed by its translation, and the original and translation are reciprocally dependent.

separable from the movement of its actualization”(42). Also see: Stephen Linstead and Torkild Thanem (2007), 11; Brian Massumi (1992), 37; Joe Hughes (2009), 134-46; Constantin V. Boundas (1996). The reviewer of this paper, nevertheless, makes a stand against the notion where the virtual and the actual are reciprocally determined. The reviewer asserts that the virtual can be regarded as Deleuze’s critical response to Kant’s notion of transcendental, condition, and the conditioned, and hence argues that by no means the actual can determine the virtual. Indeed, when Deleuze argues that transcendental empiricism “is the only way to avoid tracing the transcendental from the outlines of the empirical”(DR 144), he holds a critical view on the relation of transcendental and the empirical. He, then, in the chapter four of *Difference and Repetition* “Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference,” carefully tackles the problems of “Ideas” in relation to Kant’s philosophy. In the said chapter Deleuze also puts emphasis on the “genesis” which has a strong connection to determination, condition/ the conditioned, and the virtual-actual relation. Exhaustive elaborations on the issue of genesis can be found in *DR* 182-84; 208-14. A short essay “The Method of Dramatization” (collected in *Desert Islands*, 2004) is also helpful for understanding Deleuze’s critical response to “Ideas” and Kant’s philosophy. Even though I am convinced that Williams’s stating the virtual and the actual are reciprocally determined is impartial and one may find some supporting evidences from Deleuze (as listed above), the reviewer seems insist that Williams’s statement is incorrect. Since no immediate consent can be reached on this issue, a fair way I can conceive is to open up this question to readers for further pursuit and judgment.

The same is true to the movement of the virtual and the actual. The passage between the virtual to the actual is not an one way street, nor is the virtual “higher” than the actual. It is exactly because the virtual and the actual are reciprocal determined, becoming/ movement is possible. But what drives the movement? What makes it carry out immediate acts? Deleuze’s answer is: the problem, where thinking emerges and activates. For Deleuze, “[i]deas and problems are related to each other and *change* according to the actual solutions that are put forward for them” (Williams 134, emphasis added). To clearly explain the notion of problem, it is indispensable to bring up Deleuze’s notions of sign and virtual object, which have strong connection to repetition. This, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. It is at this point sufficient to note that the problem (sometimes disguised in the form of enigma or riddle), operating as a sign, brings about the movement between disparate series.¹⁵

In this paper, I argue that Menard’s writing project, as a translation of translation, corresponds to what Deleuze calls “repetition for itself”; Menard’s translating performance is to pursue a true simulacrum, from which the concept of translation might be explicated in a new light. The connection between Borges, Deleuze, and the concepts of repetition and translation is not at any rate arbitrary. Borges is obsessed with the notion of repetition and translation, and Deleuze further elaborates Borges’s meditation on repetition. As mentioned, Borges’s obsession with repetition is usually alongside with his meditation on history. His works seem imply a humble hope, a longing for true orders. Longing for order unveils disorder, that is, chaos. In a chaotic universe, like our living world, if a repetition can be realized, the order is no longer impossible—this is a recurring theme in Borges’s works. “Pierre Menard” creates somewhat comic effects just like *Don Quixote*; both these works depict a person who desires to identically represent the unrepresentable.

The same comic effects can be found in Borges’s another story “Funes, his Memory.” The hero Funes, a paralyzed young man, has incredible capacity of memorizing every single detail in his daily life. “He was able to reconstruct every dream, every daydream he had never had. Two or three times he had reconstructed an entire day; he had never once erred or faltered, but each reconstruction had itself taken an entire day” (*Fictions* 135). Identical repetition actually amazes, sometimes terrifies, us. Perhaps the comic effect in

¹⁵ More detailed elaborations on the notions of problem and sign, see *DR* 164-67. Discussions on the virtual object, disguise, and repetition, see *DR* 105-08.

“Funes” is not simply a rhetoric effect, or, we may say, that is not meant to make readers seriously believe Funes’ capability of reconstructing his whole-day-long mental activities, but quite the contrary. For Borges, only when identical repetition happens can chronological history be overturned, and this Borges considers to be “order.” He takes the Chinese fable Chang Tzu’s dream of butterfly to demonstrate how repetition owns a transgressive power.

In China, the dream of Chuang Tzu is proverbial; let us imagine that one of its almost infinite readers dreams he is butterfly and then that he is Chuang Tzu. Let us imagine that, by a not impossible chance, this dream repeats exactly the dream of the master. Having postulated such an identity, we may well ask: Are not those coinciding moments identical? Is not one *single repeated term* enough to disrupt and confound the history of the world, to reveal that there is no such history? (*Non-Fictions* 330)

This same desire for an order is illustrated in “The Library of Babel” as well. The universe is a library, and it is “composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries” (*Fictions* 112). The narrator tries to unravel the everlasting mystery: is the world infinite or not? He then suggests that the world/ library is unlimited but periodic. “If an eternal traveler should journey in any direction, he would find after untold centuries that the same volumes are *repeated in the same disorder*—which, repeated, becomes order: the Order” (118, emphasis added). The only possible order could be realized when an eternal traveler finds two books repeated in the same disorder. This would be a “virtual mission” since it is doubtful if there exists an “eternal traveler.”

How can we find an order within the chaos? Probably this is also a question that Deleuze confronts. How can one live in a world where principles are all paralyzed? Certainly Deleuze does not desire to present an order opposed to the chaos engulfing it. Deleuze and Guattari’s revisiting the old question “what is philosophy” might be a gesture of seeking a way out in which we are still able to “think,” namely, seeking the liberation of thought. If Borges’s response to postmodern chaos is merely a longing for an almost impossible coincidental repetition of history, if Borges’s pondering over the concept of translation is merely to bring forth a possible simulacrum which, however, turns to be a comic caricature of ideal translation as shown in “Pierre Menard,” Deleuze’s speculation upon the inseparability of difference and

repetition performs an intention more ambitious than Borges's. While Borges only focuses on repetition, Deleuze further argues that difference is the condition or constitutive element of repetition. Whereas Borges intends to overturn the irretrievable chronological history by coincidental identical repetition, the new means for the history of philosophy that Deleuze seeks is more like a *collage* in painting. At this point, here comes Deleuze's most direct reference to Borges. Deleuze claims:

It should be possible to recount a real book of past philosophy as if it were an imaginary and feigned book. Borges, we know, excelled in recounting imaginary books. But he goes further when he considers a real book, such as *Don Quixote*, as though it were an imaginary book, itself reproduced by an imaginary author, Pierre Menard, who in turn he considers to be real. In this case, the most exact, the most strict repetition has as its correlate the maximum of difference. (*DR XXI-XXII*)

The converting the imaginary and the real in Borges's story parallels to the inter-workings of the virtual and the actual. Hence the fixed distinction between the imaginary and the real is disturbed—that is what simulacrum means. Deleuze's juxtaposing difference and repetition sheds new light on the conceptual thinking of translation. It on the one hand rids translation of the notion of representation; on the other hand it suggests difference brought up along with translation is a condition for repetition of the original text.

The most inspiring part in Deleuze's taking into consideration the inseparability of difference and repetition is to draw out that these two seemingly contradictory concepts must co-exist and are necessarily inter-dependent. In Deleuze's discourses, the inter-dependent relation between difference and repetition shall be understood in light of Nietzsche's eternal return and simulacrum. Not only one time has Deleuze emphasized Klosowski's insightful reading of Nietzsche's eternal return, asserting that it is a "simulacrum of a doctrine." Eternal return means, Deleuze states, "each thing exists only in returning, copy of an infinity of copies which allows neither original nor origin to subsist" (*DR 67*). Furthermore, "the circle of the eternal return is a circle which is always excentric in relation to an always decentered center" (*LS 264*). It is at this point that the divergent and heterogeneous series in simulacrum is affirmed and it is when simulacrum "breaks its chains and rises to the surface, it then affirms its phantasmatic power, that is, its re-

pressed power” (LS 261). Simply put, what is repeated/ returned is the chaos composed of divergent series, which has no beginning or end; thus “the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned” (DR 69) and only the divergent series return. By the reversal of Platonism where the distinction between model and copy is disciplined, Deleuze proposes that what can be returned never exists prior to its return.

This paper begins with a brief review of the development of contemporary translation theory and indicates that the impasse of the conceptual thinking about “translation” is situated in the impossible conciliation between hierarchical and horizontal structures of translation. Deconstructionists’ understanding of the concept of translation exposes the distrust of definite meanings and the refusal of ontology. It is at this point that Deleuze’s discourses depart from deconstruction. Although it may appear not necessary to bring up all these philosophical debates for reconsidering the concept of translation, in many aspects the philosophical ways of thinking shed new light on our understanding of what translation is or what translation can be.

In the second part of this paper, I take Borges’s story “Pierre Menard” as a concrete example to explore the notion of repetition and its connection to translation. As “Pierre Menard” has been a rich text that evokes fruitful discussions in the field of translation studies, Deleuze’s concept of difference and repetition inspires more interesting aspects for us to examine the notion of translation. Despite the fact that a notable portion of this paper is devoted to the connection between Menard’s translation of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and the notion of simulacrum, one main argument needs to be made clear here: if, in a sense, translation is repetition of a certain text, what can be repeated does not exist prior to its repetition. It can also be put in this way: what can be translated does not exist prior to its translation. Translation makes what can be translated show itself in translation. Whereas translation is understood as simulacrum, it is no longer reproduction of a text that already existed; rather, translation is set in motion as it actualizes a virtual text. This is why Borges says that “The Cervantes texts and the Menard text are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer” (*Fictions* 94). Menard’s translation, the most exact, the most strict repetition, sets a virtual text in motion. Virtual text is not a text that already existed, but a text that is becoming. A text that is becoming is not a synonym of *différance* in Derrida’s sense because becoming is made by the interworking of the virtual and the actual. In Derrida’s discourses, the movement of *différance* is not reciprocal.

It should also be noted that the concept of translation based upon the notion of simulacrum proposed in this paper is not identical to that situated in post-colonial situation, namely, translation deprives the original of its privileged role by usurping or claiming the death of the original/ author. Simulacrum is not merely an attempt to erase what has been done by virtue of repetition, nor to assert that only re-writing or reading is what matters. Traditional concept of translation requires translation to copy the original as the model; deconstructionists' as well as post-colonial concept of translation is to replace a model by a model. In the movement of simulacrum, however, "we reach a point at which everything changes nature, at which copies themselves flip over into simulacra and at which, finally, resemblance or spiritual imitation gives way to repetition" (*DR* 128). Translation is essentially involved with translating act. Any translating act should make the text act, making it carry out immediate acts; any translating act should make the text become. However futile Menard's writing project may appear in Borges's story, creating or pursuing simulacra is doubtless an affirmative translating act that sets the text in becoming.

Works Cited

- Arrojo, Rosemary. "Translation, Transference, and the Attraction to Otherness: Borges, Menard, Whitman." *diacritics* 34: 3-4 (2004): 31-53.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977. 142- 48..
- . "From Work to Text." *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ed. Josué V. Harari. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979. 73-81.
- Benjamin, Andrew. "The Absolute as Translatability: Working through Walter Benjamin on Language." *Walter Benjamin and Romanticism*. Ed. Beatrice Hanssen and Andrew Benjamin. New York: Continuum, 2002. 109-22.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Selected Writings Vol. I*. Ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap P, 1996. 253- 63.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "An Autobiographical Essay." *Critical Essays on Jorge Luis Borges*. Ed. Jaime Alazraki. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987. 21-55.
- . *Collected Fictions*. Trans. Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.
- . *Selected Non-Fictions*. Trans. Esther Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine, and Eliot Weinberger. Ed. Eliot Wenberger. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.
- Boundas, Contantin V. "Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual." *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Paul Patton. Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996. 81-106.
- Cervantes, Miguel de. *Don Quijote: A New Translation, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*. Trans. Burton Raffel. Ed. Dianna de Armas Wilson. New York: Norton, 1999.
- Davis, Kathleen. *Deconstruction and Translation*. Manchester and Northampton: St. Jerome Pub., 2001.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson. London and New York: Verso, 1994.
- Deleuze, Gilles. "The Actual and the Virtual." Trans. Eliot Ross Albert. *Dialogues II*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London and New York: Continuum, 2007. 148-52.

- . *Bergsonism*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- . *Desert Island and Other Texts 1953-1974*. Ed. David Lapoujade. Trans. Michael Taormina. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004.
- . *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- . *The Fold*. Trans. Tom Conley. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- . *The Logic of Sense*. Trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas. New York: Columbia UP, 1990.
- Gentzler, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. Clevedon and Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2001.
- Hughes, Joe. *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*. London and New York: Continuum, 2009.
- Johnston, John. "Translation as Simulacrum." *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. 42-56.
- Kristal, Efrain. *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2002.
- Lambert, Gregg. *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*. New York and London: Continuum, 2002.
- Linstead, Stephen, and Torkild Thanem. "Multiplicity, Virtuality and Organization: The Contribution of Gilles Deleuze." *Organization Studies OnlineFirst*. London and LA: Sage Publications, 2007. 1483- 501.
- Massumi, Brian. *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Cambridge and London: The MIT P, 1992.
- Meiner, Carsten Henrik. "Deleuze and the Question of Style." *symptome* 6:1 (1998): 157-73.
- Nirajanna, Tejaswini. *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992.
- Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Politics of Translation." *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*. Ed. Michèle Barrett and Anne Philips. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992. 177- 200.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Tymoczko, Maria, and Edwin Gentzler, eds. *Translation and Power*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2002.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

---, Ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Waisman, Sergio Gabriel. *Borges and Translation: The Irreverence of the Periphery*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2005.

Williams, James. *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2003.

[Received 10 February 2010;
accepted 1 October 2010]