The mysterious case of theory and practice: crime fiction in collaborative translation

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the process of collectively translating a short text by Carlo Lucarelli, a prominent Italian crime writer. Lucarelli's novels explore a range of problems affecting contemporary Italian society, including corruption, state violence and organised crime. Consequently they are deeply rooted in their culture of origin, while also fitting into a recognisable globalised genre. This makes Lucarelli's writing a challenge to translate while also, potentially, making it quite marketable in translation, since it can hold considerable appeal for overseas audiences.

I reflect on the translation challenges from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The practical angle is based on my experience leading a group of translators, together with Lucarelli himself, at the 2013 Translation Winter School, dedicated to crime fiction, in Melbourne. Over a number of days, workshop participants prepared a consensus translation of an excerpt of Lucarelli's work, exploring practical solutions to questions of intertextuality, genre, audience expectations and culture-specific references. By analysing the process of experimentation and debate that group translation sets off, I investigate the crucial but sometimes neglected interaction that can take place between theory and practice as a piece of Italian crime fiction is reworked for an Anglophone (even Australian) audience. I also explore the many benefits of collaborative translation.

KEYWORDS

Crime fiction, collaborative translation, translation theory, peer learning, slang, humour translation, intertextuality.

A dialogue between the theory and the practice of translation is sometimes difficult to establish, yet teaching and research in the thriving discipline of Translation Studies have hopefully demonstrated by now that theorists can learn much from practitioners of translation, and translators have a lot to gain from learning to reflect theoretically on their own practice. The potential of this kind of dialogue is explored in Andrew Chesterman and Emma Wagner's (2002) exchange, in which they discuss translation from the perspectives of the "ivory tower" and the "wordface", respectively. In this article I seek to investigate not only the benefits of a dialogue between theory and practice, but also the way in which translators can learn from each other through collaborative translation, which requires an element of explicit theoretical reflection that is not always present in solo translation. Thanks to *skopos* theory and other functional approaches to translation, there is now increased recognition of the fact that most translation work involves the contribution and collaboration of a number of agents fulfilling different roles (St. André 2010: 81, O'Brien 2011). Thus, group translation activities provide fertile ground both for participants to improve their skills and for scholars to observe the mechanics of translation in practice.

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I explore here some of the challenges posed by the translation of crime fiction, drawing both on theoretical reflections about the genre and on first-hand experience of the practice of collaborative translation. In mid-2013 I led a four-day Italian literary translation workshop "Murder and Mayhem in Translation", held at Monash University in Melbourne. Modelled on the workshops devised by the British Centre for Literary Translation, these events bring together an author — in this case, Italian crime fiction writer Carlo Lucarelli — and a translator, who lead a group of translators as they devise a consensus translation of an excerpt of the author's work. In the article, I investigate problems and solutions related to style, slang and register; criminality and social prejudice; and setting, intertextuality and genre. I emphasise the translation *process* — the useful peer learning that goes on as a group of people discover more about a text and its setting, and work through a range of alternative proposals in the search for translation solutions; I also explore the insights all this might give us into translator reflexivity.

Spanish, French and Italian workshop groups were offered at the 2013 Winter School. The Italian group was comprised of thirteen participants from a wide range of backgrounds: some were native speakers of English and others of Italian (but all had a high level in both languages); some were professional translators or interpreters, others were postgraduates or advanced undergraduates in Italian Studies or Translation Studies; they ranged in age from their twenties to their sixties. During the four days we were together Lucarelli talked in detail about his work, the participants discussed the crime fiction genre, the text and the translation challenges it posed and worked on their translation: breaking off into pairs they would tackle short sections, and then the group as a whole commented on, edited and fine-tuned each section. By the end of the four days they had come up with a collective translation of some 1500 words (as well as a first draft of a further 700 words, bringing us to the end of the chapter). The goal was to produce a consensus translation that would be presented to fellow participants and guests on the final day of the Winter School, and that would be sufficiently coherent and polished to be suitable for publication. The group's consensus translation appears in this issue of *JosTrans*, while translations from previous Summer / Winter Schools have been published in Wilson and Gerber (ed.) (2012) and in Gerber (ed.) (2014).

1. Crime fiction, Lucarelli and Ispettore Coliandro

Crime fiction is a genre that is often perceived to travel quite well in translation (Platten 2011: 21), even into English, despite the fact that the Anglophone publishing industry is often considered to be far less open to literary importation than many others. The huge success of so-called "Nordic noir" in recent years is an obvious example, but there is also quite a range of Spanish, French, Italian and Latin American crime fiction

available in English these days. Perhaps this is because crime fiction offers a convenient mix of the familiar and the exotic. While much crime writing nowadays is far from formulaic, there are certain ingredients readers know they might encounter — some kind of criminal activity, a character or characters intent on finding out the truth (or hiding it), an engaging plotline, and probably a strong sense of place. These familiar features balance out the newness that comes from reading translated fiction, something some readers might find a little daunting. In fact, crime fiction in translation can be a good way of easing readers towards other kinds of writing in translation. In a panel discussion at Leeds University in September 2013, François von Hurter, co-founder of Bitter Lemon Press, described the publishing house's mission as that of "baiting" readers with crime fiction in order to get them "hooked" on foreign fiction more generally, thus paving the way for cultural exchange through literature in translation (von Hurter 2013). In short, to mix metaphors, we could think of translated crime fiction as a kind of 'gateway drug'.

As far as Italian crime fiction goes, a number of authors are becoming quite well known to Anglophone audiences, including Lucarelli, Massimo Carlotto, Gianrico Carofiglio, Giancarlo De Cataldo and Andrea Camilleri (thanks also to the television adaptation of his Montalbano series). The presence of Italian crime fiction in English has been further aided by short fiction collections like *Crimini*, published in English by Bitter Lemon Press, and the output of Hersilia Press, which is dedicated entirely to Italian crime fiction in English translation.

There is, in addition, a whole other category, which Carol O'Sullivan (2004/05) describes as pseudotranslations — those crime novels set in Italy but written in English by American or British authors, almost a kind of crossover category between crime fiction and travel writing. While not examples of *Italian* writing, they are certainly instances of the attraction the Italian crime scene exerts on Anglophone readers (see also Chu 2000, Maher 2013).

The development and global expansion of the genre of crime fiction is itself the fruit of decades of translation and pseudotranslation, with each receiving culture subsequently advancing the genre in its own way. The genre of crime fiction can thus be thought of as a global megasystem characterised by exchange across a number of different national, transnational, imported and borrowed traditions. Textual movement within this global literary system has included the export of the US and British traditions of crime writing to Italy (and elsewhere); the development of these traditions within the Italian context; the translation of a small proportion of the best-known Italian crime fiction into English; as well as the generation of a subgenre of crime writing written in English but set in Italy. Numerous different agents play a part in all this: translators, authors, publishers, editors, marketing departments, critics, reviewers and readers. My focus here is largely on the translators.

For the Winter School, we chose to invite Lucarelli because of his importance on the Italian crime-writing scene. He has written numerous novels, and for many years he has hosted a television programme called *Blu notte*, in which he investigates unsolved crimes in Italy's recent past, including many in which the highest echelons of society are suspected of complicity. A number of his novels — from the Commissario De Luca series and the Ispettore Grazia Negro series — have been translated into English but, importantly, there were other works as yet untranslated, including his three short novels, first published in the 1990s, about Ispettore Coliandro (Lucarelli 2009), and I chose one of these for the workshop. The attraction of the Coliandro novels was the fact that they offered a stimulating range of translation challenges including slang, swearing, some jargon or specialised language, irony, humour and a strong sense of place. The group worked on chapter 2 of *Falange armata*, a story about a group of neo-Nazis and a series of murders in which a number of corrupt police officers and outwardly respectable members of society turn out to be implicated. Lucarelli told the group he found it ultimately a little stifling to write these first-person stories because of the character's limited linguistic range, hence the brevity of the series. However, the narrative voice provides a wealth of interesting challenges to the translator. The protagonist lives on — and has found great success — in a television series entitled *L'ispettore Coliandro*, also written by Lucarelli. There has also been a Coliandro story in comic form (Lucarelli and Catacchio 2007).

2. Reflections on the challenges of translation: theory and practice

What follows are some reflections on the translation decisions made by the group, and on the collaborative and discursive processes through which they were reached. These processes were characterised by negotiation (Eco 2003) — both literal negotiation among group members, and negotiation in the more extended sense of evaluating, prioritising and managing source text effects and target audience needs and expectations. Considerable time was spent reflecting on the genre of crime fiction, and familiarity with its conventions helped to shape the group's translation decisions and allowed them to theorise about and justify their choices. This process of justification and negotiation develops reflexivity and flexibility, which are key components of the translator's skill set (and also essential when negotiating a final product with editors and other agents involved in the production of a translation). These skills are further discussed in section 3.

2.1 Colloquialisms, specialist language and register

Realism is an important element of much crime fiction, and Lucarelli undertakes extensive research in his effort to create a realistic world for his characters and stories. This includes attempting to capture faithfully

police procedures, structures, attitudes, and ways of speaking (although he also acknowledges that he has to make some modifications for dramatic purposes). (Unless otherwise stated, comments attributed to Lucarelli were made in the course of the workshop discussions.)

Every country's law enforcement system is different, and Italy's is quite complex, with several different kinds of police and of course a number of ranks within each force. From a translator's point of view, sometimes these distinctions (and even rivalries) are important to the plot; at other times, attempting to achieve complete precision might detract from the reading experience, since the target-culture reader's background knowledge in this area is always going to be more limited than that of the source-culture reader. As always, it is a question of negotiation (Eco 2003): making case-by-case decisions based on the context in which something occurs. So for example, *una volante del Controllo territorio* becomes simply a 'squad car' in our group translation, eliminating the reference to the exact area of responsibility of that particular branch of the police. When Coliandro overhears a panicked radio call to a *brigadie'* (an abbreviated form of *brigadiere*), the group translated it as 'Sarge', prioritising the drama of the moment over achieving full terminological precision with regard to the man's rank. On the other hand, when Coliandro arrives (uninvited) at a crime scene and there are both *polizia* ('police') and *carabinieri* (the national military police) in attendance, this is an important detail, and the group retained the two Italian terms, a strategy that is widely used both in translations of Italian crime fiction and in those pseudotranslations mentioned above. For example, Michael Reynolds and Oonagh Stransky, in their translations of other novels by Lucarelli, retain words like *carabiniere*, *questore*, *commissario*, and so on (see e.g. Lucarelli 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008). In a similar vein, Joseph Farrell's translation of Valerio Varesi's *River of Shadows* (2010) opens with an "Author's note" explaining the different reporting responsibilities of *carabinieri* and *polizia*, and the relative ranks of their main representatives within the novel. Despite its title, this note was included by the translator, not the author, for the benefit of British readers (Farrell, email communication). Publishers of crime fiction in English translation seem, on the whole, to be fairly tolerant of these kinds of incursions from the source language.

Coliandro speaks like the police officer he is. His language includes police, legal and criminal jargon, bureaucratic language, southern Italian influences as well as Bolognese inflections. Like any literary slang — as pointed out by Daniel Linder (2000: 276) — this kind of language is carefully constructed by the author. Indeed, Lucarelli has spent long periods of time around police officers as part of his research, and modelled the language of Coliandro and other police characters on speech styles he observed.

The challenge slang presents to translators of crime fiction is brought to life in a scene from Pablo De Santis's novel, *La traducción*, in which a group of translators — themselves caught up in a mysterious and perilous crime scene — get together to discuss the translation of crime fiction (1999: 131-2). They debate whether to translate the speech of New York mobsters into the *lunfardo* dialect spoken in and around Buenos Aires, eventually concluding that they should "only translate novels with deaf-mute gangsters, in order to avoid the problem of colloquialisms" (my translation; "Hay que traducir solamente novelas con pistoleros sordomudos, para evitar el problema del coloquialismo") (De Santis 1999: 140). Of course, such an extreme policy would be rather limiting in the real world. During the workshop at Monash University — a safer and more law-abiding setting than that of the translation conference in De Santis's novel! — the group had to decide which variety of English to use, and eventually they opted for a kind of 'Australian lite', which aimed to include Australian English inflections without being so strongly marked as to be caricatured *à la* Steve Irwin. For the swearing this gave us a register everybody in the group was comfortable with. So we have 'a bloody madhouse' and 'poor bugger' (corresponding to *un gran casino* and *bella sfiga* respectively); Coliandro comes across 'a shitload of traffic' (*un casino di macchine per la strada*), and at one point he 'crack[s] the shits' with another officer (*m'incazzo*). Admittedly, some of these translations change the semantic domain of the swearing from sexual to scatological, but the register is certainly more or less equivalent in terms of strength of taboo (moderate) and level of informality. Coliandro's Italian idiolect also at times displays a tendency towards understatement that maps very nicely onto Australian English, which is characterised by dry, ironic understatement as well.

The novel also draws on the language and narrative impulse of comics, television, cinema, commercials and pop music (Crovi 2002: 131, Maeder 2009: 271), so pace and rhythm are very important. Events are recounted in the present tense, which is not uncommon in contemporary Italian fiction, and which conveys the sense that Coliandro lives in the moment and is not a very reflective type (indeed, this is one of the qualities that make him a rather bad detective). There are also frequent moments of drama and suspense. Even Coliandro's dreams are action-packed, as in this scene at the start of the chapter:

> Sto sognando che sono al cinema a guardare *Terminator 2,* bestiale!, quando una signora grassissima si siede nel posto accanto al mio e mi schiaccia col sedile ribaltabile la mano che lasciavo penzolare. Sento un male becco, ma non posso urlare, perché Schwarzenegger sta sparando con il mitra e i colpi mi coprono la voce e la signora, maledetta, non si sposta, e anche i pugni che le tiro contro una spalla affondano inutilmente nella sua ciccia molle, e allora metto la mano sotto la giacca per prendere la pistola, ma mi accorgo con un brivido ghiacciato che la fondina è vuota. È l'angoscia che mi sveglia, prima ancora della fitta acuta alla mano sinistra, da cui capisco che stavo dormendo sul dito incrinato (Lucarelli 2009: 55).

> I'm dreaming I'm at the movies watching *Terminator 2* – awesome! – when this huge woman comes in and as she sits down her seat crushes my hand. It kills but I can't scream, because Schwarzenegger's firing a machine gun and the shots drown out my voice and the woman, damn her, isn't moving, and even punching her on the shoulder is useless, my fist just sinks into her blubber, and so I reach inside my jacket to grab my gun but a chill runs down my spine when I find the holster's empty. It's the panic that wakes me even before the shooting pain in my left hand, and I realize I've been sleeping on my busted finger.

Getting the rhythm right is essential to preserving both the fast pace and the narrator's colloquial tone. Reading aloud always helps a lot with this, and that was a huge advantage of the group translation process — it necessitates a lot of reading aloud, which gave participants the chance to fine-tune the language each time a false note was detected in a character's voice. Over time, with each reading and fine-tuning, a kind of "collective voice" emerged, which became a consistent and coherent way for Coliandro to present himself in Australian English.

2.2 Social problems in contemporary Italian society

Lucarelli's work always deals with social problems in contemporary Italy, and racism and sex work feature among the topics covered in the excerpt we worked on. There has traditionally been the tendency for crime fiction to be a white genre — with a white detective and any non-white characters, all too often, being involved in criminal activities (Messent 2012: 96–97). In the case of Italy, crime fiction has actually been one of the areas in which authors have been most willing to tackle questions related to immigration and racism, though Barbara Pezzotti has found that, in the case of crime fiction set in the north of the country at least, foreigners still tend to be represented as either perpetrators or victims of crime (2012b: 176–177). In *Falange armata*, foreigners are seen through the eyes of Coliandro himself who, representing the mindset of an *italiano medio* or 'average Italian' according to Lucia Rinaldi (2009: 127), generally expects foreigners to be up to no good.

During the workshop, Lucarelli described the technique he used for depicting the casual racism of his inept protagonist without — he hoped — allowing those attitudes to be in any way condoned. Every time Coliandro's racism — or his sexism or his general arrogance — comes through, events conspire (through the author's intervention, of course) to give him what Lucarelli calls a *bastonata*, 'a beating'. This usually involves Coliandro being humiliated and shown up for the idiot he is (but see Chu 2001 and Pieri 2007 for analyses of some problematic aspects of the way racism and non-white characters are represented in Lucarelli's Coliandro series). At the same time, in our discussions Lucarelli stressed how important it is for Coliandro not to be too unlikeable. His prejudices are not based on hate but rather on ignorance and superficiality. He is an unreflective and unreconstructed sort of fellow, but basically an honest

cop: *onesto ma perdente* ('honest but a loser'), as Lucarelli put it. What this means for translation is that careful attention needs to be paid to the tone of Coliandro's discourse towards the Other, both women — whom he tends to consider inferior and incompetent, even as his eyes are inexorably drawn to their neck- and hemlines — and migrants — whom he automatically equates with criminals. The group spent a good deal of time fine-tuning his racism in English. In Italian, Coliandro occasionally uses offensive words like *negro* / *negra* — we did not wish to weaken or censor these racist attitudes in English but nor did we want our Anglophone Coliandro to come out sounding like a neo-Nazi thug or a Klansman, as these are not contexts to which he belongs. For a group of people who would never dream of using such racist language themselves, this becomes quite a tricky exercise in vocabulary and register selection. Pitch this wrongly and you change the characterisation and also disrupt the irony that is so central to the novel. So, for example, as he contemplates passing a sleepless night by using his authority to hassle some sex workers along the city's ring road, Coliandro refers to one of them as *una negra* (Lucarelli 2009: 58); this became 'some black tart'. The use of 'black bitch', or of stronger and more offensive racist vocabulary was judged too harsh in tone. 'Some black tart' retains the racism but is slightly less nasty, and this seemed appropriate for Coliandro. One reason this moment is important is in showing that Coliandro's bravado is rather empty — he decides against harassing the women because he fears one might throw a high-heeled shoe at him, as happened to a colleague.

When Coliandro uses the word *marocchino* ('Moroccan'), it is hard to capture in English all the prejudice and cultural baggage with which it is overlaid. Coliandro (and, sadly, many Italians) tend all too often to use the term *marocchino* as a kind of shorthand for 'criminal' — someone probably involved in drug dealing or theft. When Coliandro, having left his gun and holster hanging from the bedhead, *Lethal Weapon*-style, gets a nasty shock in the middle of the night, he cannot possibly take responsibility for his stupidity; instead his instinct is to blame it on a *marocchino*, as he matter-of-factly tells us:

> girandomi nel sonno, mi sono agganciato l'orecchio alla fibbia del cinghino e, madonna mia, ancora non ci posso pensare. Mi hanno dato due punti. In Questura ho dovuto dire che era stato un marocchino (Lucarelli 2009: 56).
>
> once I rolled over in my sleep and caught my ear on the buckle and, bloody hell, I still can't bear to think about it. I had to get two stitches. Back at the station I had to say it was some African guy.

The very fact that Coliandro does not so much as entertain the thought (*ho* dovuto *dire*…, 'I *had* to say…') that he might be able to tell a different, non-racially-profiled sort of lie about his wound — given that his pride prevents him from admitting what really happened — is an indication of how ingrained his racial prejudice is. What should the translator do with this fictive 'Moroccan' though? For a non-Italian audience, blaming the

debacle on a 'Moroccan' might seem a little over-specific and in fact, 'some Moroccan' / 'some Moroccan guy' did not really work.

There was the option of focusing only on the criminality of Coliandro's imaginary assailant, but a solution like 'some drug dealer' or 'some crim' would mean censoring his racism, which did not seem appropriate. We also tried combining all the elements — the person's race and their perceived criminal background — but that became clunky: 'some African (Moroccan / black) dealer (pusher / crim)'. Another option the group canvassed was to try to capture the connotations *marocchino* has in this context by drawing on Australian English and Australian racial prejudice, for example by making the invented assailant a 'Leb' or 'Lebo' (an Australian pejorative for Lebanese, a group whose members are sometimes victims of similar prejudice in the Australian context). One problem here, however, was the incongruity: Are we or are we not in Italy? If translation is about cultural exchange then we have to be careful about eliding or assimilating source-culture elements in an effort to find felicitous target-language solutions. While racism occurs all over the world, its contexts are different and in this case, too much overlap would have become uncomfortable and, ultimately, unfaithful to the Italian context of immigration, racism and criminal activity. While the language variety was to be 'Australian lite', the setting was to remain rigorously and faithfully Italian. So in the end, the group opted for 'some African guy'. Coliandro's association of ethnicity with criminality remains implicit — anybody attacking a police officer is presumably involved in criminal activity without it being spelt out. As a translation choice it might not be anything staggering, but what I believe the group found particularly beneficial was the discussion that brought us to this decision — a detailed and rigorous process of suggestion, debate, rejection and refinement. In fact, this is a process that really never ends. When I presented an early version of this study at a conference, Mark Chu pointed out that 'some African guy' is too general to convey the important connotation of 'Muslim / Arab' that underlies this use of the word *marocchino*. This is one translation choice that probably still needs revisiting. The beauty of group translation is that it requires participants to think about and justify their reactions and decisions. This is something the solo translator does not always have to do, though of course not even the solo translator works entirely alone — they always need to answer to commissioners, editors, publishers, readers, and so forth. Boris Dralyuk (2014) observes that "even when a translated text bears the name of a single translator, it is often the result of a collaborative effort," drawing on input from friends, acquaintances and experts.

Returning to the question of the *bastonata*, or 'beating', in a neat twist of dramatic irony, we later see Coliandro punished for his racism when he comes across an actual *marocchino*. In this scene, two colleagues are dealing with a man in a tweed jacket and a *marocchino* (again, 'some African guy' in the group's translation). The officers tell Coliandro it is a

case of attempted robbery, the victim is a doctor on his way back from a house call. Coliandro promptly thumps the *marocchino* over the back of the head, only to learn that he is Doctor Kalili, the victim, and it is the tweed-jacketed Italian who is the petty criminal. Just like his self-styling as a *Lethal Weapon*-type cop or as a hard-boiled harasser of sex workers, Coliandro's attempt at a display of power is shown up for being just pathetic and misdirected posturing.

2.3 Setting and intertextuality

Also quite specific to the source culture is, of course, the setting, Bologna, a city which, thanks to the work of Lucarelli and a number of others, has become, according to Luca Somigli, Italy's "premier noir city", "the de facto 'capital' of the Italian *giallo*" (Somigli 2011: 74). Lucarelli has been one of the most important writers in "document[ing] the phenomenon of increasing urban sprawl" in Italy (Nerenberg 2012). During the workshop he explained to the group that he sees the cities along the via Emilia, the highway linking all the region's major centres, as forming one giant extended city, a little like the Los Angeles of the hard-boiled tradition (see also Pezzotti 2012a: 100). This unsettling and multifaceted Bologna, in which Coliandro frequently finds himself out of his depth, has been analysed as reflecting the nature of globalised organised crime in a sprawling metropolis (Rinaldi 2009: 128). During the workshop, Lucarelli related how he often visits the scenes of his fictional crimes during the planning stage, and in this regard it was very valuable for us to have the author present, explaining, for example, the ethnically determined positioning of sex workers along the city's ring road (or *viali*) during the 1990s and the concept of the *puttantour*, a kind of drive-by ogling. Google Maps, Wikipedia and YouTube can certainly help a great deal with this sort of thing, but the author's insights greatly helped the translators to understand — and to visualise — the scene described, which had initially somewhat confused them. This ensured that ultimately the translation captured the scene correctly.

In terms of the intertextual play with the hard-boiled school of both fiction and visual culture, we were lucky in that we could assume most readers of translated crime fiction would also be familiar with the main tropes of that tradition. They would therefore be able to pick up ways in which the Bologna setting reflected and refracted that of the US metropolis, and also the irony in Coliandro's (mostly failed) attempts to model himself on heroes inherited from the American literary and cinematic crime canon.

3. The benefits of collaborative translation

As Sharon O'Brien (2011) has pointed out, nowadays collaborative translation is an important part of the skill set of professional translators, as work in the field increasingly involves the collaboration of two or more translators, not to mention other agents involved in the creation of the

final product. Likewise, James St. André (2010) emphasises the importance of complementing the traditional focus on solo translation tasks in translator training with activities of a collaborative nature, reflecting the reality of the profession today.

Of course, the kind of group translation undertaken in the Translation Winter School is not an entirely real-world scenario. Participants did not have to worry about sales or the market, and they got to be their own editors — choosing their target audience, house style, variety of English, and so forth. Moreover, the speed imperative was not the focus of the activity, a far cry from the situation in many sectors of the profession, where collaborative translation is used as a time-saving strategy (O'Brien 2011). If I were to generalise, I would venture to say that the novice or student translators in the group marvelled at how much more rewarding it was translating with others — they loved the extra support and ideas, the learning they engaged in, the chance to hear such a wide range of suggestions and opinions — while the more experienced professional translators marvelled more at how *incredibly long* it took to make every tiny decision! In short, while a dozen heads may be better than one, there are practical reasons why consensus translation of this kind — with everybody commenting and working on everything — is not the industry norm. Nevertheless, all participants in the workshop recognised the high standard of the finished product, drawing as it did on so many people's linguistic knowledge, life experience, cultural background and erudition, and all said how much they got out of the experience. Thus, the participants' motivators were strictly "social" and "personal", to use O'Brien's (2011) categorisation, rather than "commercial". Most saw the event as a learning activity and/or a form of professional development.

Collaborating with Lucarelli was particularly useful and participants spoke appreciatively of the benefits of being able to consult with the source text author about connotations, cultural background and authorial intentions. This was not just a one-way street, however, as the encounter also led to a realisation on Lucarelli's part of the enormous responsibility translators have for an author's fate in a foreign country ("hanno in mano la vita e la morte dell'autore in un paese straniero"). Also beneficial was the mix of native and non-native speakers of English in the group, along with a few who could be considered fully bilingual. Translation teams combining native and non-native expertise are relatively common in poetry translation, but there are only a few prominent examples in the area of literary prose (for example, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky for Russian), suggesting that this remains an area in which the advantages of collaborative translation could be further explored (Dralyuk 2014). In fact, the pervasive focus on solo translation in TS research ignores the long history of collaborative translation that exists in non-Western cultures, where group translation and complex division of interpretive labour was the norm for many centuries (St. André 2010, Tymoczko 2006: 18).

One of the most useful aspects of the Winter School experience was the fact that group translation brings with it a need to justify one's opinions and choices, and I think everyone found it thought-provoking to be forced to put their own translatorial reasoning into words, and enlightening to hear others do the same. Reflexivity is an important skill to develop in novice translators, and one that experienced translators should continue to focus on and refine throughout their careers. Yves Gambier (2012) observes that this kind of "metacognitive monitoring" is a key aspect of the process-oriented translator training that is favoured nowadays in most tertiary institutions offering degrees in Translation Studies, noting that "reflective behaviour […] sooner or later becomes routinized behaviour". Donald Kiraly stresses that we need not think of the translator's mind as an "opaque black box" whose contents we may never observe, but the only way to know what goes on inside a translator's head is if he or she articulates this (1997: 138). Such information is not just intrinsically interesting but also useful in improving the teaching of translation as well as the translation practice of those already accredited and practising professionally.

Andrew Chesterman has identified "translation is thinking" as one of the prevalent memes shaping the way we conceptualise translation. Central to this meme is the idea that "the translator should, above all, be self-aware" (1997: 41). In this sense the activity described in this article is of value not only to novice translators and students, as they develop the necessary self-awareness, but also to professional translators who might have become so accustomed to working alone that they have let many of their strategies become unreflective. This also links in with Chesterman's observations on the importance of consciousness-raising — in different forms and in different ways — at all stages on the road to expertise (1997: 150). In the context of group learning that involves participants of different backgrounds and levels of professional experience, informal 'thinking aloud' such as what took place at "Murder and Mayhem in Translation" can be particularly useful in developing, modelling and reinforcing good translation practice. In this sense, group translation inspires a very stimulating interaction between theory and practice, since explicit reflection on language, characterisation, culture, genre and audience is a constant part of the collaborative translation process.

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Biography

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