Translation and Experiment

Theoretical Inquiries into an Emerging Concept for Translation Studies

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Translating Dancing Tongues

How do you translate a text that dwells on ambiguities, that plays with the materiality of language and the meaning generated in the space between languages? The scholar and translator Chantal Wright opted for an experimental approach to translating such an experimental text, namely Yoko Tawada's "Porträt einer Zunge." As anyone familiar with the work of the German-Japanese author Tawada knows, her essays revolve around language and translation while also reflecting on gender, literature, writing, and interculturality. Wright expressly calls her translation "an experimental translation" and comments: "It is in the nature of an experimental approach that some will perceive it as having gone too far, and others not far enough" (33n1).[1] She does that while opting for a middle way, in between the rewriting of a text and the notion of fidelity: "My prose translation seeks out that space—which has always been open to translators of poetry—located between enslavement to the original and the creation of a text that is so loosely inspired by the source text that it is no longer, strictly speaking, translation" (29). What is even more interesting: she includes herself in the translation and reflects on this experimental translation. This gives rise to a situation in which the translator speaks and continues a relationship that is imagined by Tawada herself in her

1 In her study, Lily Robert-Foley also alludes to Chantal Wright as an example, calling her text "simultaneously translation, commentary and life writing" (*Experimental Translation* 179).

writing. The translated text, in the left side of the column, is amplified through the extensive commentary on the right side:

I told P that I intended to paint a "portrait of a lady." "I'm not a lady," P countered with a smile. Some women who live abroad remain eternally young because of the distance to their mother tongue. They love their old mother and her tongue from afar without being exhausted by it.

A commonly held belief about exiles, expatriates, refugees and immigrants is that their native languages eventually suffer from attrition: removed from the source of linguistic infusion, the members of such groups use their native language only at home and within the small community of other native speakers that surrounds them. Here, however, we have another view: freed from the source, women who live abroad remain eternally young (the narrator reforges the semantic connection between "mother tongue" and "mother").

I and M, Prague '68ers who fled to Germany after the Russian invasion, are examples of asylum seekers turned immigrants. In conversation with their adult son on a trip to Prague, they talked about how their Czech is very different from the Czech spoken in Prague today. They suspect that this divergence did not come about through a gradual linguistic evolution but is the result of an overt attempt by the authorities to erase traces of the Prague Spring from everyday life by replacing the old radio and television voices with new ones in the early 1970s. M and I's Czech was not subjected to this purge, residing as it did in Germany at the time. (Tawada, "'Portrait of a Tongue' by Yoko Tawada" 45–47)

Inserting the self into the text is a common practice of critical writing, and not something that has emerged only after Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts*. It shows how Wright literally goes beyond the original, making herself visible as a translator (on this aspect see Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation* 19). By no means is this insertion of the self into the text meant to be "an exercise in narcissism" (Wright 26). Wright seeks to show "a protocol of how a translator encounters a text" (26). She literally occupies space—and is not invisible. On the contrary, she shows that every translation is a polyphonous act of reading. Therefore, Wright's translation of Tawada serves as a perfectly fine example for experimental translations, which transgress many beliefs one might have about what a translation is and how it might look. Experimental translation does not only provide visibility to the translator; it also allows one to gain a new perspective on linguistic differences (Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation* 19–20) and is therefore highly prone to theoretical and philosophical inquiries into the convergences and disparities of language(s). Like Wright, the portrayed translations in this volume go beyond common conceptions of translation and show fresh, creative, and bold texts. Each contribution focuses on one example and, through the methodology of close reading, engages with different voices who, as this volume argues, are far from having gained the attention they deserve in literary studies. The main thesis of this volume is that experimental translation sheds a new perspective on commonly judged slippages in translation and discovers the aesthetic and epistemic potential of translations as *sui generis* textual forms. In this sense, this volume also advocates for more inclusion of translation analysis in literary studies and in university curricula in the realm of literature.

Instead of writing a resume on each one of the following contributions, I wish to take them as a ground for my reflections on the nature of experimental translation. Additionally, I will include a summary of the state of the art—which seems necessary for such a dynamic field—that is linked to the present historical moment and the current developments in the field of humanities. Therefore, I wish to draw on ideas and reflections found in this collection's articles in order to develop a conceptual and theoretical inquiry into the potential of "experimental translation" in literary studies. Before diving into these concepts, I wish to emphasize that most articles of this volume were written in the context of German academia, and precisely from the perspective of scholars (and sometimes also translators) who speak from their experience in comparative literature and various philological fields (German studies, classic philology, Romance languages, etc.). It is important to stress this perspective,

given that a volume on experimental translation produced in the context of *Translatologie* would assume a completely different methodology. The present contributions approach translation from a philological and comparative point of view. (On the potential of a philological study of translation, see Toepfer.)

What Is Experimental Translation?

When I first started to think about the notion of experimental translation, there were fewer bibliographical references to the subject than in the present moment. There has been a boom in academic literature delving into the notion of experimental translation—not least due to the increasing boom in AI, which has profoundly transformed translation in practice and theory. In her most recent monograph, Lily Robert-Foley explores the potential of experimental translation in the context of the rising importance of AI (*Experimental Translation*; see also Luhn, *Spiel* 39–40). This dimension is mentioned but not explored in the present contributions, which engage with experimentalism from a different perspective. While there are more scholars participating in this debate from a global perspective, I will, in addition to Lily Robert-Foley's research, concentrate on the approach of Anna Luhn, which I find most fruitful for this present volume.[2]

In 2021, Robert-Foley first published an essay to which most of the following contributions refer. In the essay, Robert-Foley starts with an extensive list of possible forms of experimental translation ("Politics" 401–04), some of which will also be discussed in this collected volume. While experimental translation can take many forms and is not "a recognized literary form" per se, Robert-Foley states that the most basic definition would be "any translation practice that opposes itself to translation norms" and that could also be referred to as "conceptual" (406, 401, 404). The experimental character opposes itself to rigid definitions: "The location of the practice itself in between forms,

2 Nevertheless, I want to mention other contributions that show how on a global scale there is a greater concern with experimentalism and translation studies. See, for instance, the monographs from Robinson and Lee, to which I will only refer selectively. Several shorter contributions also dwell on the notion of experimentalism in translation (mostly without exploring it further), such as Berretti. (I am citing this article from Berretti as it was published in *Open Edition*, and therefore without pagination.) Further references to research on experimental translation can be found in Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation*.

texts, languages, and cultures makes it hard to catalogue and classify, as any translation practice becomes slippery in the transition to theory" (406). Robert-Foley continues to explore the idea that experimental translation questions the very definition of translation and is therefore deeply embedded in theoretical endeavors (405). Experimental translation thus constitutes "a threat to the mainstream dogma of translation, in particular, the place of fidelity, equivalence, accuracy, transparency, smoothness, and legibility" (405). Those exact values are also questioned in the present volume through the idea of the "original," which is connected to the idea of fidelity and authority. But, as Robert-Foley also explains, one has to be careful even with this very basic notion of experimental translation, since the "translation doxa" (410) that experimental translation opposes has to be embedded in its precise historical context: "At least some of what I have identified as experimental translation only finds itself in opposition to the norms of the modern era" (410). Continuing this line of thought, Robert-Foley also explains that the deconstruction of the notion of fidelity needs to be carefully contextualized: being faithful to a marginal text can question power relations just as much as not being faithful to a canonical text (417)—experimentalism, therefore, always needs contextualization.

Robert-Foley continued her reflections in her recent monograph, *Experimental Translation*, which was published in 2024. As stated, this book engages with translation in the light of the developments in AI—my depiction of the state of art will mostly concentrate not on the different procedures and the specific examples that Robert-Foley evokes, but rather on her reflections on the term "experimental translation." In her book, Robert-Foley underlines the definition of experimental translation while questioning norms of translation, such as fidelity and the focus on meaning (13). She precisely states that experimental translation is "a device for interrogating and challenging marketplace norms and practices of translation in the age of algorithmic production" (216). Apart from this quote, which reflects the subversive potential of experimental translation, I consider the explorations on the closeness of experimental translation, adaptation, and experimental writing especially fruitful (33–34, 210, 212–13). According to Robert-Foley, those categories relate to one another, they "overlap," but they are by no means identical (213, see also 210). The nucleus of experimental translation in contrast to these other forms of writing is the relation to another language: "language difference matters" (215).

Luhn, who has also contributed an article to the present volume, continues Robert-Foley's explorations in two publications written in German: At the center of Luhn's reflection is the ludic and playful character of experimental trans-

lations (*Spiel*; on this dimension, see also Lee), which will also be a recurring pattern in the contributions of the present volume. But this playful and ludic nature does not mean, as Luhn repeatedly shows and also emphasizes in her present contribution, that those translations are not motivated by very serious intentions and agendas. Luhn therefore stresses the notion of experiment as a tool for gaining knowledge and new insights. In her study *Spiel mit Einsatz*, Luhn places emphasis on specific scenes of experimental translation, both from a practical and from a theoretical point of view. In her reflections, which follow those of Robert-Foley, Luhn explores how the notion of experimentalism is older than the notion found in recent contributions to experimental translation. In fact, she exposes how many theoretical reflections on translation that one could consider progressive dwell on experimentalism without further exploring this term and its implications (*Spiel* 58). She analyzes the connection between experimental translation and textual criticism (138), which is an aspect also highlighted in Judith Kasper's essay on Anne Carson's translation of *Antigone*, as well as in my own reading of Maria Gabriela Llansol in the light of Baudelaire scholarship, and which ultimately marks Robert-Foley's definition of experimental translation as "creative-critical, practice-based research interrogating translation norms and epistemic virtues" (*Experimental Translation* 18).

Contextualizing Experimentalism: From Naturalism to the Vanguard

Before diving into the nuances and perspectives of these collected case studies, I want to deepen the connection between experimental literature and experimental translation. [3] The connection between these two concepts has been explored by Luhn from the point of view of scholarship (*Spiel* 59–61). I would additionally like to depict the genealogy of experiment as an aesthetical category, while alluding to its discourse through very selected readings. The research on literature and experimentalism is extensive, and, for this reason, I will consider only two examples.

3 The reflection on the concept of experimentalism is based on the explorations of this term in Jöhnk, *Poetik des Kolibris* (esp. pp. 211–18). Some parts in this section are translations and rewritings from one chapter of that text, which is concerned with experimental literature (translation does not play a role).

The concept of experimental literature is often and rightfully connected to the experiments of the vanguardist movement and is understood, in this sense, as an exploration of new grounds and a break with former aesthetic techniques (Berg 143)—something that Luhn also mentions in her present contribution in this volume and that Robert-Foley also underlines as an important parallel to experimental translation (*Experimental Translation* 8–9). This is convergent with the aforementioned definition of experimentalism in translation studies, which stresses the aspect of breaking rules in relation to the normative conception of translation. Experimental literature has different meanings: in one sense, it characterizes the fascination with sciences that was evident in many nineteenth-century French authors, such as Honoré de Balzac, Stendhal, Gustave Flaubert, or, especially, Émile Zola (Schwerte 397).

In 1880, Zola published his manifesto *Le Roman expérimental*, which was essentially related to a text from the physician Claude Bernard, namely his *Introduction à l'étude de la médicine expérimentale*, which had appeared fifteen years earlier (Zola; Bernard). In the same way that Bernard had transferred the methodology of experimentation from physics and chemistry to medicine, Zola wanted to adapt the concept to literature (Zola 59–60, 62, 81; Schwerte 398). Zola was primarily concerned with his characters and their constellation. He believed that the experimental setting should understand how people are influenced by their social milieu as well as by physical and chemical powers (Zola 72, 96; Schwerte 398).

Zola's concern with experimentalism concentrates on characters (their determination and behavior), as can be seen in *Thérèse Raquin*; they—and not form, as we might think—become the site of experiment (Schwerte 399). This distinguishes his conception of experiment from the ideas developed in the aesthetics of the vanguardist movement (Schwerte 399). Currently, experimentalism is, as stated above, especially connected to the vanguard movement; this is consistent with the applied notions of experimental translation, given that most contributions focus on translations brought to light after the aesthetic revolution of the vanguardist movement (on this aspect, see Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation* 8–9). In this sense, a vanguardist experimental text is above all an aesthetically experimental text that challenges notions of genre, language(s), and form. Within the vanguardist movement, one might think about André Breton's *Manifeste du Surréalisme* (Stockwell). In this text, Breton shows how he envisions experimental aesthetics, while not expressly referring to this term. He describes an experimental setting for writing (his notion

of *écriture automatique*); by doing this, it becomes possible to reproduce this experimental setting for writing (Breton 327, 331–32).

With this in mind, I would like to draw some conclusions about the transmission of experimentalism from literature to translation: Firstly, there is not just *one* definition of experimentalism; and secondly, experimentalism can be situated in distinct periods of literary history. Experimentalism in translation, as in literature, is linked to concepts like failure, playfulness, and ludicrousness, as well as to transgressions of an aesthetical and moral nature—aspects that have been explored by different contributions on experimental translation (see Lee; Robinson 171). Experimentalism might have a certain aim, but it is not afraid to fail (Prusák).

Situating Experimental Translation

The case studies found in the present volume show that experimental translation is not a category limited to a certain historical moment. As already indicated by Robert-Foley, the historical setting needs to be carefully contextualized, given that normative views on translation change over time and are also connected to geographic and linguistic cultures. Robert-Foley refers to Donna Haraway's situating of knowledge in her explorations (Haraway; Robert-Foley, "Politics" 407–08). I wish to expand on those reflections in light of the contributions in the present volume. While the summarized literature on experimental translation concentrates on a broader perspective, this volume will give time and space to study experimental translations individually. This is consistent with the object, given that, as stated, experimentalism in translation is something that needs to be situated, that is resistant to narrow definitions, and that should be studied in its own intertextuality.

Every contribution in the present volume forges its own nuance of experimental translation. There are no preconceived definitions; the goal lies in understanding what experimental translation means and how this concept is fruitful when thinking about translation. [4] Beginning from this perspective, I

4 It may be useful here to comment on the plurality of conventions that are at issue in the volume. Given that this collected volume addresses experimental translation practice, each contribution seeks an individual approach to providing English translations of the analyzed works. And while MLA stylistic conventions are generally followed, diversions from such guidelines are made in selected instances and for specific reasons.

wish to emphasize Kasper's notion of experimental translation, according to which every translation is an experiment because it discovers something new in the act of rendering a text from one language to the other. Concentrating on "experimental" translation allows all the contributions in the volume to have a different perspective: instead of judging or criticizing a translation, they see the aesthetic potential in linguistic errors and failures. This is the case, for instance, in Caroline Sauter's portrayal of Bella Berkovich's translation of Albert Cohen's *Livre de ma mère*. Bella Cohen, née Berkovich, was the third wife of Cohen. The original was dictated to her, and, after her husband's death, she translated the book into English. In her contribution, Sauter sheds light on a translation that has been characterized as having purposefully "clumsy" and "awkward" language, but that is, precisely because of those characteristics, interesting. Here I want to underline that, at least in German academic culture, the view that translation is material that needs to be *judged* instead of *interpreted* is still in vigor. Focusing on experimental translation therefore allows us to consider translation as primary source material and as a *sui generis* literary form beyond judgement and review.

In order to situate experimental translation, it is necessary to contextualize the speaking person.[5] Therefore, it seems important to note that many contributions were written by scholars and translators. Melanie Strasser explicitly explores this speaking position in her contribution, which addresses her own work as part of the Viennese translation collective Versatorium. Just as Berkovich inserted herself into the translation of Cohen's *Livre de ma mère*, and into the mother-son relationship at the center of this text, Sauter inserts herself, as scholar-translator, into her essay by attending to her relation to her own mother. In this sense, the self becomes a site of experiment, as observed in Wright's translation of Tawada. The performative dimension of experimental translation, which is stressed in Luhn's contribution, is therefore literally being performed while we are reading.

While experimentalism might seem like a "modern" phenomenon and, as such (at least to my knowledge), has been explored mostly in relation to modernity, it is important to keep in mind that also in early modern times there was not just one way or methodology to translate a text (Brown 136–86). This aspect is stressed by Julia Heideklang in her analysis of experiments that were conducted with Latin quotations during retranslations of Niccolò

5 On the convergence of experimental translation and auto-theory, see Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation* 177–79.

Machiavelli's *Il Principe*. In this sense, the only contribution to this volume that addresses early modernity questions whether the category of "experimental translation" is modern, given that early modern cultures, in their translation practices, were already open to, and even undertaking, what is now called experimental translation. This characteristic is also stressed by Kasper, who, as mentioned, sheds light on the fact that every translation is an experiment, in the sense that it uncovers something new that was not known beforehand.

In his reflections on translations, Venuti has repeatedly referred to experimentalism, particularly in modernism and in connection to Ezra Pound (Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility*, esp. 198, 214), but also in other contexts (Venuti, *Scandals* 12, 15, 123). Nevertheless, this volume argues that it is possible and necessary to connect the concept of experimental translation to texts from early modernity and from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as shown by Heideklang and Stefan Willer. This becomes even clearer when looking at the eighteenth century, where the trend of pseudo-translation questioned the distinction between original work and translation (see Vanacker). In this context, it is worth keeping in mind legal issues, such as the fact that the lack of copyrights prior to the nineteenth century gave translators more freedom (Nebrig and Vecchiato 2). The "invention of the original", which changed the public's relation to the concepts of "original" and "translation," is said to have taken place during the eighteenth century (Poltermann). In his contribution, Willer explores an unknown side of Goethe: as translator of Denis Diderot, he forged the neologism "originalmäßig," which is ironically a translation from the French "textuellement" and is an adjective that describes something similar to an original, which nevertheless cannot be identified as original. The potential of experimental translation before the twentieth century is also reflected in the sexist concept *belle infidèle*, which refers to a translation that is aesthetically attractive, but not "faithful" to the original. Lori Chamberlain, in "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation," has famously critiqued this gendered notion of fidelity, alluding to its place in civil law and the idea of possession and power.

The notion of translation as an experimental technique is inscribed within the dichotomy between "faithful" and "free," which scholars such as Hilary Brown consider anachronistic: "The terms belong to a past era, recurring in debates about translation prior to the twentieth century, and contemporary translation theorists have developed a range of more sophisticated approaches to translation analysis" (144). Robert-Foley also contextualizes the notion of fidelity when she says that the breaking of norms related to fidelity has to

be regarded in connection to the translated text ("Politics" 417). Moving away from the original therefore has a different meaning when one departs from a canonical text rather than from a marginal text. The notion of fidelity is repeatedly questioned in the present volume: While "fidelity" gains a rather literal quality in Berkovich's translation of her husband Cohen (and infidelity is metaphorically used by the loving widow in order to insert herself in a loving, textual mother-son relation; see Sauter), the notion of fidelity does not seem to necessarily contradict the experimental approach of Goethe (Willer) and of Llansol (Jöhnk).

The present volume begins with texts that are often considered canonical, with translations of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Baudelaire (Achim Geisenhanslüke; Kasper; Heideklang; Jöhnk). Those translations of very canonical texts find their own way to relate to tradition as well: Not only the "original," but also—even more so—its history in translation, is part of the translation process. Some of the translators have a very renowned and canonical place in literary studies. This applies to Paul Celan as well as to Carson and, it goes without saying, Goethe (Kasper; Geisenhanslüke; Willer). Others are marginal and poorly known translators, such as Berkovich or Llansol (Sauter; Jöhnk), and in these cases gender relations also play a part. In this context, Robert-Foley reminds her readers about parallels between experimental translation and feminist translation ("Politics" 414–15).

Going Beyond the Original, Questioning Power Relations

Common to all the contributions in the present volume is a critical engagement with the concept of "original." The title "beyond the original" is an homage to Yasemin Yildiz's *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, which explored the potential of multilingualism in literature. Many case studies from the present volume could be related to the "scandals of translations" portrayed by Venuti (*Scandals*). In this way, many contributors draw attention to the fact that their translations were harshly criticized; this applies to Carson (Kasper), Llansol (Jöhnk), and Berkovich (Sauter).

The critique of originality and faithfulness is not new to translation studies, but it still has to be stressed. A volume on experimental translation certainly cannot fail to reference Haroldo de Campos, a Brazilian writer and lawyer who translated extensively and brought into Portuguese parts of the Hebrew Bible, Ulysees, Goethe, and many others, and who is frequently mentioned

in the context of experimental translation (Jöhnk, "Übersetzungstheorie"; Luhn, *Spiel* 13–21; Robert-Foley, *Experimental Translation* 16–17). In numerous texts he reflected on a new vocabulary to relate to translation, speaking of "recriação" ("recreation"), "transcriação" (transcreation), "re-luciferação" ("re-luciferation"). His refreshing approach to translation also had to be expressed lexically. In "Da tradução como criação e como crítica," he explicitly described translation as a collective endeavor and experiment while evoking the concept of the laboratory (Campos 35; Luhn, *Spiel* 20–21). In this essay, Campos discusses his own translation work in groups and shows how experimental translations were developed to a considerable extent in the Global South.

The French scholar Tiphaine Samoyault has explored the question of power and translation in her study *Traduction et violence*. As already shown by Robert-Foley, experimental translators question power relations; this is also shown in the contribution about Llansol's translation of *Les Fleurs du mal* (Jöhnk). The way that questions of power are at the heart of experimental translations has also been addressed by Robert-Foley ("Politics" 410; *Experimental Translation* 215). Luhn also stresses that conflict is an inherent moment of experimental translation (*Spiel* 119).

By now, what can be understood as an experimental translation, along with the way that discussions about this concept are fruitful for analyzing translations, has become evident. However, it is important to critically engage with experimental translation, as well as to consider its limits. The concept of experimental translation could also be considered elitist in light of its vanguardist character (see, for instance, Venuti, *Scandals* 12, 15–16, 18). This is even more true when looking at some of the translators portrayed here, who are sometimes hermetic, and resistant to interpretation. Some of these translations are very academic, in the sense that one needs a lot of knowledge in order to understand them. Therefore, experimentalism in translation could also be considered a tool for self-fashioning and for exhibiting one's own cultural capital and position in the literary field. Some experimental translators might seek to distinguish themselves in the Bordieuan sense, and most translations studied here are not amongst the most successful in respect to readership. The more experimental a translation is, the more it attracts an academic (and relatively narrow) readership. In this sense, experimental translation serves as currency, and it does not only question power relations—it might fortify them as well.

Forms of Experimental Translation

Robert-Foley invokes an extensive list of possible forms of experimental translation ("Politics" 401–05). In many of the volume's contributions, experiment is explicitly connected to "form" (Sauter; Jöhnk). Different subcategories of experimental translations are portrayed throughout the volume: Heideklang depicts the case of retranslations of Latin quotations; Luhn concentrates on a translation that could be categorized as pseudo-translation; Willer sheds light on a translation that translates an already translated text back into the original language (or, to be precise, produces "new translations"); and Strasser writes on her experience with collective translation. Carson's translation is also translated (Kasper), which shows how a translation becomes a source-text for another translation and gains more independence. Apart from that, the present volume mentions mistranslations, bad translations, collective translations, and homophonic translations. As already mentioned, many of those categories blur distinctions between multilingual/bilingual texts, translations, adaptions, and re-writings (Geisenhanslüke; Heideklang; Kasper; Luhn; Willer). The articles and the translators nevertheless insist on the term "translation." Luhn draws attention to the fact that this insistence is not a detail but possesses a performative level. But experimental translations not only perform the precarity of the original, they also epitomize it, as in the case of: antique source material (Kasper); Goethe's peculiar translation of Diderot, in which the translation gained the status of original and was subjected to new translations into French (Willer); or Hervé le Tellier's pseudo-translation of the fictitious Portuguese author Jaime Montestrela (Luhn).

Time plays a crucial role in every contribution. For instance, attention is given to: differences in historical time and reflections on translation's time (Sauter); translation as a means of constituting time and relating to one's own time (Geisenhanslüke); and the way that time can recur via haunting (Sauter; Willer). In this context, it becomes clear how experimental translation can be consistent with an experimental text as well as with a text that belongs to the classical canon. In the case of Celan, Shakespeare's poems are adapted into Celan's own realities and historical time, and they are made to reflect life events such as the Goll affair and the destruction of Celan's reputation (Geisenhanslüke).

Amidst all the different forms of experimental translation, one characteristic seems dominant in every article, namely the importance of exchange, dialogue, and community. Many contributions explicitly stress the importance of

collective work, as seen in Wright, who, as previously noted, re-created her dialogue with the text (Sauter; Strasser). Scholarship on experimental translation has also placed emphasis on this collective dimension (see Luhn, *Spiel* 135; Berretti). This collective and dialogical dimension needs to be emphasized, because even if experimental translation questions what translation actually is, the intense intertextual dimension persists (Luhn, *Spiel* 102; "'Dieses Spiel"). The relation to the translated text can sometimes assume a very personal dimension, as in the case of Berkovich translating her husband's work (Sauter), or of Goethe translating in a competitive and agonistic way his friend and rival Diderot (Willer).

Just as this form of translation is fueled by a collective effort, this present volume is the fruit of a collective endeavor and ongoing dialogue. Its starting point was a workshop on "Translation: Experiments," which Caroline Sauter and I organized. This workshop was held at the Institute for Comparative Literature at Goethe University Frankfurt in May 2023 and funded by the Johanna Quandt Young Academy. I want to express my gratitude for the funding of the workshop by the Johanna Quandt Young Academy and the financial support of this present volume by the University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg, the Forschungsförderung Fachbereich 10, and the R3 Support at Goethe University. The present volume testifies to the constant occupation with translation in the realm of comparative literature, a global and transcultural—but also precarious—discipline that, just like translation, does not have an easy and comfortable position in German academia.

May 2025, Frankfurt/Main

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