Figures of speech | *Figure retoriche*
Verbal and Visual in Brett Whiteley

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> *By definition, therefore, translation is metonymic: it is a form of representation in which parts or aspects of the source text come to stand for the whole.* (Tymoczko 1999: 55)

1. Metaphors at work

People from different times and cultures have referred to translation using a range of metaphors. In many tongues the etymology of the word translation is metaphorical; among the others, the English "to translate" is derived from the Latin words "traduire" and "traducere" and the Russian переводить, meaning "to carry over".

In this paper, translation engages not only with metaphors, but the 'consistent multiplicity' (Alliez & Feher 1986: 41) of figures of speech that intersemiotically animate Australian artist Brett Whiteley's (1939-92) verbal and pictorial language. The aim is to address some 'formative questions […] concerning language, medium and meaning' (Harrison 2004: 5) by studying the rhetoric devices featuring in two texts: a letter written by Whiteley to his mother in 1979, and the painting *Art, life and the other thing* (1978). The letter and the painting intersect in a series of hypertextual links, and map language nomadism across words and images.

These reflections are part of a research journey through Whiteley's words in open connection with his visual work, achieved by translating a representative choice of these scripts from English into Italian[1]. With

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a sensitive touch, George Steiner argued that in order to near the best understanding of a text, it is essential to experiment with that intimacy which only comes about through the patient and passionate process of translating the author into one's own language (Steiner 1975: 48). In general, Steiner's influential discourse on translation conceived as a living metaphor for human understanding has dramatically widened the epistemological ambition (Ribeiro 2006) of translation studies. In particular, the process of researching on Brett Whiteley through translation has gradually overlapped with that of researching on translation through Brett Whiteley.

As Steiner pragmatically and programmatically said, 'what we do have are reasoned descriptions of processes' (Steiner 1975: XVI). Encouraged by his rejection of any theory of translation in favor of 'working metaphors' (Steiner 1975: XVI), the ultimate goal of this spurious study is to display and comment upon the mechanisms by which the translator's work produces metaphors, and thus becomes a 'working metaphor'.

2. Cultural eyes

Oscillating between heterogeneous media such as painting and writing, intersemiotic translation embodies a vital movement of searching for and producing sense. When in a concise online article on pictorial languages and languages of culture Peeter Torop puts forward that 'the pictorial grows at the expense of the verbal and even through the verbal [and] this means that, in the picture-being, culture-being is reflected and, in the fate of the picture, the fate of culture is shown' (Torop 2003), he is portraying contemporaneity as the very basis for dealing with word-image osmosis. Today's culture sees the primacy of pictures:

> *'Culture as a media environment, which surrounds the human being, is largely made up of pictures and the words that accompany them, just as it earlier consisted of words and the pictures accompanying them. The historical tension between the picture and the word has changed both of them'* (Torop 2003)

Torop's theory describes culture as an infinite process driven by 'total translation'[2]. In particular, after arguing that intersemiotic[3] relations figure among the main principles of text generation, he concludes that culture

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has an 'intersemiotic dimension' (Torop 2003: 280). Three decades earlier, Steiner had evocatively suggested that original and translation coexist in an intersemiotic relationship that is active and simultaneous at the same time (Steiner 1975: 442)[4].

Italo Calvino touched on intersemiosis when he presented 'multiplicity'[5] as a password of contemporary culture. He introduced the topic of his American lecture *Molteplicità* as 'il romanzo contemporaneo come enciclopedia come metodo di conoscenza, e soprattutto come rete di connessione tra i fatti, tra le persone, tra le cose del mondo' (Calvino 1988: 101). Calvino's network of facts, people, and worldly things is a literary vessel of intersemiotic relations.

In a media environment where 'novels have been produced to be seen, and pictures to be read' (Shelton & Okayama 2006: 158), how can we update to broadband vision, and enhance our perception of linguistic promiscuity? Is it true that decoding word-image vernacular requires adapting to 'a cultural eye' that 'does not differentiate sharply between script and picture (Shelton & Okayama 2006: 158)?

3. Entering a painting

According to Torop, 'the entrance into pictorial language' coincides with 'a multiple and multilingual translation' (Torop 2003) that the viewer performs thanks not only to semiotic competencies, but also cultural know-how. In order to succeed in deciphering a picture, in other words, we must be able to catch both its literal meaning and its metaphorical status. But how do we penetrate between the lines?

First, entering a painting presupposes that the text is a through-space. This implicit availability offered by the painting - made explicit by translation - develops from Umberto Eco's idea of 'open work' (Eco 1989: 3), a seminal manifestation of art whose very essence entails a certain degree of openness towards its performer. In Eco, potentiality resides in 'movement':

> *the "work in movement" is the possibility of numerous different personal interventions, but it is not an amorphous invitation to indiscriminate participation. The invitation offers the performer the opportunity for an*

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> *oriented insertion into something which always remains the world intended by the author.*
> *In other words, the author offers the interpreter, the performer, the addressee a work to be completed.* (Eco 1989: 19)

If entering a painting allows its completion, and coincides with multiple and multilingual translation, we must deduce that to translate an open work is potentially[6] to complete it. In this sense, any intersemiotic translation not only expands its original, but also integrates it.

Second, since the painting guides the interpreter/performer/addressee/translator in, the latter becomes - rather than an outsider - an oriented, integrated and outgoing presence. Torop's parallelism builds a space where multiplicity and multilingualism are very welcome. In my case, three immanent decisions - 1. being an Italian living in Australia; 2. being a translator; and 3. studying comparative literature by specializing on a painter – become a multiple and multilingual portal to the texts under study[7].

4. Collage living

Before moving on to the analysis of the letter and the painting by Whiteley, some attention is due to a medium of text generation that both texts feature: collage.

In a problematic essay, French authors Eric Alliez and Michel Feher describe the city of the film *Blade Runner* as a new kind of metropolis characterized by a mixture of past and future, where different languages coexist. This dense mixture is visible on the one hand through the intricate architectural layers that combine and build up the cityscape, and on the other in the endless movement of its inhabitants, and the hero in particular. The only two elements binding the city together are the rain (a natural element) and a street language (a cultural element), 'a patois of German, Spanish, Chinese, etc., used by the immixture of the various groups that make up the metropolis's population' (Alliez and Feher 1986: 44). Here translation becomes 'explicit in the coexistence and mutual contact' of the myriads of languages spoken in the city (Steiner 1975: 495).

Alliez and Feher define the sophisticated city as a 'city-collage' (also called 'city-montage'), 'one that is not content to simply superimpose

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heterogeneous pieces like so many archaeological strata, but rather disposes them in a consistent multiplicity' (Alliez and Feher 1986: 41). Spaces and objects have lost their original purpose not because of negligence but rather because of constant recycling: 'vehicles and shops are constructed from the most diverse elements, superimposing futuristic and archaic strata[8]' (1986: 43).

Collage is a practical metaphor of text production, and was also abundantly employed by Whiteley. In the city-collage, cultural and linguistic diversity is signalled by the tangible presence of remnants of the past that express their contemporary potentiality: it is the realm of translation. Alliez and Feher essentially utilize the image of the sophisticated city to illustrate contemporaneity as a patchwork of cultural seeds that become the foundation of our culture. The ability to translate these sediments is the foundation of our knowledge.

5. The letter

The first text is a 1979 letter by Whiteley written to his mother Beryl[9], in which the painter depicts his drug addiction begun in the mid-Sixties and now experienced as abstinence. On the one hand this piece is a mini anthology of Whiteleyan leitmotifs; on the other hand it abounds with elements of biographical significance.

Whiteley must keep clean for twelve days; he describes this timeframe as a 'difficult confusing deeply depressing' torture. While illustrating this ongoing ordeal he first meanders back to the previous year's routine, then flashes forward to future work projects - a book, a retrospective show, and a new exhibition. His account is intertwined with pensive hints about rebirth and responsibility towards his own talent and the world. The letter concludes with Whiteley's ultimate wish to turn into 'a great man'.

> *Jan 29/79*
> *Dear Ning,*
> *Firstly, let me congratulate you on your wisdom. I think it's the finest letter I've ever received from you… in that the Scorpion intolerance, hurt, fear for my drug problem has been replaced by the facility of love, a love that you have always found difficult to spawn, […] a difficulty I, indeed, have inherited from you to a degree… still it accounts for our vigorous*

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independence. The letter arrived by a beautiful + beaming Fran, who had taken the liberty to read it and felt so proud of you she handed it to me with tears.
Dr Carl Edmunds is very pleased with both Wendy + I. I can tell you it's been the most miserable difficult confusing deeply depressing gaoled 12 days my mind has ever had to spend. Not so much craving the drug, but feeling the desolate panic that doesn't exist any sort of future, so intertwined had I become with this false lover, so powerful had its control over our lives become… I have had to visually become reborn to the world. […]
I knew it would be a period, it began with Driscoll and it somehow became necessary driving the confusion of that . Before I could recognize where I was we were deeply addicted, for the past year since Michael dropped away, we have just been confronted with panic, fear of police burst, overdosing + the great strain of finding $300 a day. A really unhappy wasteful period. The days have seemed like weeks… yet only 12 days to smash through and to glimpse that there can be a second chapter. My book is coming out in a month the proofs are flying back + forth from Bologna. The Art Gallery is preparing my retrospective for later this year, every newspaper in Australia wants a four journalist interview front page from me. Of course I am not psychologically ready yet for any of this. But each day I feel stronger + surer and the realization of the deep responsibility I have to my talent, to share it with my fellow Australians… With the world… […]
You're right about my problem with the press, I've never really known which Brett to be for them. "Thought the rules of the road have been lodged… it's only people's games that you're got to dodge… and it's all right ma I can make it" Bob Dylan.
Bad Pyrmont, wisely, + bad television + bad weather is off. You're right. Another hospital is not what we need. I have a beautiful theme exhibition "Birds", … just taken 'Bird' and making a smallish perfect statement about them… another inheritance from you!
Opening at Robin Gibson March 3-31 (all painted without heroin) won't you come for that. Come earlier if you want some sun. I'll pay your return fare from the Melbury Rd account whenever you're ready… just cable. Believe in me, as I believe in a new + deeper friendship with you from your letter.
I am fighting the biggest struggle of my life at the moment. I am trying to become a great man.
My love x Brett

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Whiteley's pen is erratic and jumpy - his sentences are unbalanced and compulsive. He tends to isolate and emphasize oppositions, swinging between extreme feelings and visions ('facility of love', 'found difficult to spawn') that reconcile in reassuring tones ('still it accounts for our vigorous independence'). He narrates himself as a binary artist whose signals are on one side artificially convulsed, and on the other easy and pleasant to the eye.

Unfastened word chains erupt out of punctuation ('miserable difficult confusing deeply depressing gaoled 12 days') and result in a sequence of fractures. The writer amplifies pathos through the use of hyperbolic exclamation marks, and a compounded and derived lexicon. Rhythm relies on repetitions and suspension dots; in the paintings, these correspond to chromatic echoes, pattern reiteration, distortion (to create the effects of dynamism and/or alienation), and studied dislocation of spatial elements.

In Whiteley graphisms such as mathematic symbols (+, -, and numbers) and drawings (the triangle) intrude similarly to words in the paintings - primarily for their graphic effect, but also functionally. In a similar way, he emphatically connects his own reflections to his inspirational models by including quotations (Bob Dylan features in this letter).

Whiteley writes in a sophisticated bi-dimensional way: the translator must adhere as much as possible to his idiosyncratic spontaneity, and preserve the flavor of stylistic naivety. The textual analysis makes evident that – similarly to the visual vocabulary obsessively recurring in various paintings[10] - the same vocabulary features in numerous letters, and draws intertextual and intratextual correspondences.

6. The painting

The year 1978 witnessed Whiteley's triple triumph at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney: the painter won the Archibald Prize for *Art, life and the other thing*, the Wynne Prize for *Summer at Carcoar*, and the Sulman Prize for *Yellow Nude*.

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Brett Whiteley, ***Art, life and the other thing*** (1978), Collection: New South Wales Government. (Triptych) Oil, glass eye, hair, pen and ink on cardboard, plaster, photography, dried PVA, cigarette butts, and hypodermic syringe on board, 90.4 x 77.2 x 122 cm, 31.1 x 31.1 cm.

Art, life and the other thing[11] is a triptych; let us start arbitrarily from the left side - although we could read the work from either one or the other way[12]:

The first panel is the portrait of a monkey in the act of injecting drugs[13]. The animal is in chains presumably in Sydney's Taronga Zoo (Whiteley had painted a collection titled *Zoo* in 1965), bleeds from the syringe holes, and both eyes cry white teardrops. A great number of cigarette butts are stuck onto the bottom left corner of the board; other collaged objects are the monkey's eyes and hair, and a hypodermic syringe.

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The animal is three-handed; one extra human hand enters the painting from the top left and offers the monkey a syringe. For Whiteley hands work as a consumed metonymy of the painter while the rest of the painter's body is invisible. Frequently painted hands seem to have penetrated the painting from one edge, and are busy with drawing on a sketchbook or painting on a canvas.

The central self-portrait is the largest panel: it depicts Whiteley holding the controversial black & white drawing by Australian artist William Dobell (1899-1970) that won the Archibald Prize in 1943 after being challenged because of claims it was a caricature rather than a painting[14]. Whiteley's figure, seen in profile, is heavily distorted, his left arm especially being exaggeratedly disproportioned; his face is painted in a cubist style so that we glimpse four profiles and the forehead at once; the features of the face have been completely messed up, and the right eye - wide open towards the viewer - is significantly bigger than the left eye.

Whiteley holds the drawing in his left hand and a pen in the right hand. As in the previous panel, the ochre color fills a blank area of the painting that contrasts significantly with the confusedly sketched face. Similarly, by collaging organic fragments of his own body as well as artificial body parts (a glass eye) onto the surface, Whiteley demolishes the boundary between art and life, and makes the artist become more relevant than the painting in itself.

Finally, the third image is a photographic self-portrait. Andrew Benjamin has recently remarked that 'photograph simply acts out photography's relation to painting; it mimes it. In acting it out it depends for the effect on that relationality' (Benjamin 2004: 105). In fact, also in this case the background is ochre, however Whiteley's face occupies the picture plane almost entirely: the mouth is shut; the eyes escape to the left, out of the frame and of the whole artwork.

7. Painted figures of speech

Figures of speech populate two communicating levels of *Art, life and the other thing*: some of them are restricted to each individual panel; some others are generated by the dialogue between at least two pictures.

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Panel 1

Personification | Personificazione: giving human qualities to animals or objects. The baboon stands for Whiteley (replaced by the figure of the painter in panels 2 and 3), and also embodies the painter's addiction which, he feels, turns him into a monkey.

Emphasis | Enfasi: the prominence given to a syllable, word, or words, as by raising the voice or printing in italic type. White paint and the monkey's wide-open jaws exaggerate the tragedy (drug addiction) which is already quite dramatic in itself.

Anaphora | Anafora: the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of several consecutive sentences or verses to emphasize an image or a concept. The repetition of painted hands emphasizes the obsessive ritual of drug-injecting. It also parodies the cliché of the painter's creative presence featuring in numerous paintings by Whiteley.

Synecdoche | Sineddoche: presents a kind of metaphor in which either a part of something stands for the whole (or vice versa), the species stands for the genus (or vice versa), or the stuff of which something is made stands for the thing itself. Here two eyes on the same face side are used for one, Whiteley's authentic hair is used for Whiteley, cigarette butts are used for cigarettes (but are also a metaphor of consumerism), and the syringe is used for heroin.

Onomatopoeia | Onomatopea: a word that imitates the sound it represents. The monkey's open mouth has the same effect of either onomatopoeia or synaesthesia. Whiteley frequently writes onomatopoeias, and occasionally draws onomatopoeic word balloons in paintings.

Metonymy | Metonimia: the substitution of one word for another with which it is associated. The hand and hair are metonymies of Whiteley[15].

Panel 2

Emphasis | Enfasi. Whiteley's super-long arm and cyclopic eye allude to the distortion of reality that heroin produces. Dobell's drawing[16], which symbolizes artistic freedom of expression, counterbalances them.

Antonomasia | Antonomasia: the substitution of any epithet or phrase for a proper name[17]. William Dobell's drawing stands for the Archibald

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Prize, the reason why *Art, life and the other thing* has been conceived and is being exhibited.

Synesthesia | *Sinestesia*: a neurological condition in which two or more bodily senses are coupled (for instance, letters or numbers may be perceived as inherently colored, while numbers, days of the week and months of the year evoke personalities). The empty ochre background is the silence in which Whiteley's figure strikingly resounds.

Repetition | *Ripetizione* (also called *epizeuxis*, or *palilogy*): the repetition of a single word with no other words in between. Whiteley's profile lines reiterate themselves four times without a pause[18].

Flash-back | *Flash-back* (or *Analepsis* | *Analessi*): an interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached. Dobell's drawing reminds us of a previous edition of the Archibald Prize that caused great controversy.

Panel 3

There are no figures of speech in the photograph; the image is plain, it contrasts and balances panel 1 and panel 2.

The 3 panels

The following figures of speech result from the interaction between two or more panels.

Hysteron-proteron | *Hysteron-proteron*: the first syntagm refers to something that happens temporally later than the second syntagm. The word order in the title of the painting (*Art, life, and the other thing*) does not correspond to the displayed narrative sequence, and invokes attention to the central idea (*Art* matches with the central panel) by placing it first.

Climax-Anticlimax | *Climax-Anticlimax*: a point of greatest intensity in an ascending series. Climax and anticlimax coexist because we can start reading the painting from either the left side or the right side.

Parallelism | *Parallelismo*: it gives two or more parts a similar form so as to give the whole a parallel construction. There is a parallelism between the monkey's hands and Whiteley's profiles; another parallelism exists between Whiteley's painting and Dobell's drawing.

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Oxymoron | *Ossimoro*: combines two normally contradictory terms. Silence and noise cohabit this painting in the flash of monochromatic background and striking figuration.

Metaphor | *Metafora*: a direct comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects. The monkey is the painter; Dobell's drawing symbolizes inheritance from the past.

Asyndeton | *Asindeto*: a stylistic scheme in which conjunctions are deliberately omitted from a series of related clauses. Between one panel and the other there are no conjunctions – they are simply juxtaposed: this deliberate omission forces the viewer to infer the logical connections.

Antithesis | *Antitesi*: the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, usually in a balanced way. In this painting, the most evident antitheses are dramatic/ plain, art/life, one thing/ opposite thing, and photograph/painting.

8. 'Language, medium and meaning'

The title of the painting is not written down, yet is implicit. It is still Torop who proves that 'the simplest model of thinking is said to be the relationship between the picture and its title. While viewing the picture, its title comes to mind for the viewer even if it's not there or is not legible from afar. Viewing is accompanied by inner verbal translation' (Torop 2003).

Not only does the artwork consist in three visual syntagms, but also the title *Art, life, and the other thing* is a triptych. This parallelism makes the viewer associate each panel with one of the three elements in the title. Still, the word order of the title does not mirror the structure of the painting: if we were to read the artwork from either the left or the right, we would need to subvert the order of the panels in order to preserve the sequence "*Art – life – the other thing*". An additional fact confirms and reinforces the asymmetry between verbal and visual: in the three panels, the various painted eyes look in different directions, so that the viewer instinctively chases these directions by continuously shifting the gaze to the right or to the left.

The syntagm *Art* logically matches the central panel - because it shows a famous drawing, because Whiteley's face is cubist, and because Whiteley is holding a pen (and not a syringe).

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The word *Life* describes the photograph - the most realistic panel. In many cases, Whiteley mixes paint and photography in an osmotic duet: the two elements add contrast and alienation to each other, and fix the artwork temporally.

Finally, *The other thing* belongs to the panel with the monkey. Unlike in panels 2 and 3, here the artist has chosen to adopt a periphrasis: a euphemism of the word "drug". On the contrary, *Art* and *Life* are truisms - they translate the concepts illustrated by the painting and the photo into words: they are the reading keys of the two works, which straightforwardly and authoritatively reveal to the viewer how to interpret the images. In this sense, they are also apostrophes.

Embedded in this artwork is also an inscription located on the top left side of panel 1. It recites: *'rage/rage/against the dying of the light/DYLAN THOMAS'*. It is a metaphorical verse of the poem *Do not go gentle into that good night* by Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. Thomas' father had been a robust, militant man most of his life, and when in his eighties, he became blind and weak. Disturbed to see his father become "soft" or "gentle", Thomas is rousing him to continue being the fierce man he once was.

9. Back to the letter: the figures of speech

At this stage, our second reading of Whiteley's letter will concentrate on verbal and visual figures of speech. The verbal one have been [highlighted], as well as all the potential links to the painting.

> *Jan 29/79*
> *Dear Ning,[epithet]*
> *Firstly, let me congratulate you on your wisdom. I think it's the finest letter I've ever received from you… in that the Scorpion intolerance, hurt, fear for my drug* (triptych) *problem has been replaced by the facility* (photograph is juxtaposed to distortion) [antithesis] *of love, a love* (hands) [epanalepsis] *that you have always found difficult to spawn, […] a difficulty I, indeed, have inherited* (drawing) *from you to a degree…*[aposiopesis] *still it accounts for our vigorous* (brush strokes) *independence* [antithesis]. *The letter arrived by a beautiful + beaming* [alliteration, emphasis, and hendiadys] *Fran, who had taken the liberty*

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to read it and felt so proud of you she handed it to me with tears.
Dr Carl Edmunds is very pleased with both Wendy + I. I can tell you it's been the most miserable difficult confusing deeply depressing gaoled 12 days my mind (photograph of Whiteley's head)[metonymy, alliteration] *has ever had to spend. Not so much craving the drug, but feeling the desolate panic that doesn't exist any sort of future* [anastrophe], *so intertwined had I become [anastrophe] with this false lover* [metaphor + personification], *so powerful had its control over our lives become* [anastrophe]*… I have had to visually become reborn to the world. […]*
I knew it would be a period, it began with Driscoll and it somehow became necessary driving the confusion of that . (collage) [catachresis, reticence]. *Before I could recognize where I was we were deeply addicted, for the past year since Michael dropped away, we have just been confronted with panic, fear of police burst, overdosing* (syringe) *+ the great strain of finding $300 a day. A really unhappy [euphemism] wasteful period. The days have seemed like weeks* [simile]*… yet only 12 days to smash through and to glimpse* (eyes) [metaphor] *that there can be a second chapter* [metaphor]. *My book is coming out in a month the proofs are flying back + forth from Bologna. The Art Gallery [metonymy] is preparing my retrospective for later this year, every newspaper in Australia [hyperbole, asyndeton] wants a four journalist interview front page* (close-up photograph) *from me. Of course I am not psychologically ready yet for any of this* (self-portraiture is self-description). *But each day I feel stronger + surer* [hendiadys, alliteration] *and the realization of the deep responsibility I have to my talent, to share it with my fellow Australians… With the world…*[climax] *[…]*
You're right about my problem with the press (Dobell's Archibald Prize caused a big controversy) [synecdoche], *I've never really known which Brett* [antonomasia] *to be for them* (in the painting there are three Bretts). *"Thought the rules of the road have been lodged… it's only people's games that you're got to dodge… and it's all right ma I can make it" Bob Dylan.* (Dylan Thomas's quote)
Bad Pyrmont, wisely, + bad television + bad [repetition] *weather is off. You're right. Another hospital is not what we need* [litotes]. *I have a beautiful theme exhibition "Birds", … just taken 'Bird' and making a smallish* [dysphemism] *perfect statement about them… another inheritance* (Dobell's drawing) *from you!*
Opening at Robin Gibson March 3-31 (all painted without heroin) won't

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you come for that [rhetoric question]. *Come earlier if you want some sun. I'll pay your return fare from the Melbury Rd account whenever you're ready… just cable.*
Believe in me, as I believe in [repetition] a new + deeper friendship with you from your letter. I am fighting the biggest struggle of my life [hyperbole] *at the moment. I am trying to become a great man [climax].* (theme of art and life as a struggle)
My love x Brett (also the painting is signed)

10. A final starting point

The comparative analysis of Whiteley's painting and letter displays that the translating process is deeply influenced and sometimes completely transformed by the concurrence of heterogeneous elements. Pictures and words relate to each other: when translation enters, the text is completed[19].

A productive way of decoding and translating Whiteley's language consists in studying how he translated his own words into pictures and vice versa (figures of speech are an example). But only with an eye to broader cultural matters we can grasp multilanguage as a consistent multiplicity made of words, images, and more.

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NOTES

1 A research project titled *Brett Whiteley: A Literary Approach* started in 2006 and continues today. Its two main goals are to:
   1. investigate Brett Whiteley's words in open connection with his visual art creations. The analysis of the words left by Whiteley, including his reflective pieces, statements, correspondence and notebooks, is being carried out in parallel with the study of his artworks (paintings, sculptures, etc.), to emphasize the significant link between the two media.
   2. translate a representative selection of Brett Whiteley's scripts from English into Italian. The practice of translating these texts is considered as a means/process rather than a final result, and the analysis and commentary of the original texts displays this process of translating as an essential component.

2 'It is possible to describe culture as an infinite process of total translation, where 1) whole texts are translated into other whole texts (textual translation), 2) whole texts are translated into culture as various metatexts (annotations, reviews[…]) (metatextual translation) 3) texts or text groups are translated into text units (intextual and intertextual translation), 4) text made of one substance (for example, verbal) are translated into texts made of other substance (for example, audiovisual) (extratextual translation).' (Torop 2003: 271-272)

3 Intersemiotic translation can be defined as translation occurring 'among nonverbal sign systems without the implication of verbal signs (Augusto Ponzio, in Petrilli 2003: 13).

4 'The musical setting of a poem generates a construct in which the original and its 'translation' […] coexist in active simultaneity'. (Steiner 1975: 442)

5 After wondering whether 'texts […] any longer voice individual stylistic characteristics?' (Harrison 2004: 93), Australian poet and scholar Martin Harrison meditates:
'Teaching writing, the study of the text, an acknowledgement of the way multiple connections are made when reading – these activities have been modified and to some degree overtaken by the writing practices of the digital interface. A writing practice which, sampling and recombining from many different sorts of text and image, can then connect narratives in many-levelled networks is a writing which formally transcends the requirements of Barthes' notion of text. Interactivity, speed, access, multiple links, pathways – these are some features which determine writing in the hypertext domain. Barthes' readerly idea of polysemy and of acknowledging links between texts is farsighted. But, however much it anticipates the structuring of writing as hypertext, it is an idea tied to the assumption that writing still represents a static, already

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completed cultural space bristling with signs to be analysed and essayed'. (Harrison 2004: 94)

6 Paolo Bartoloni has developed this issue in *Translation and Potentiality* (Bartoloni 2003).

7 I believe that pointing out the writer's perspective on the subject matter helps to clarify to some extent the aims and limits of his/her study. As historian Carlo Ginzburg made evident in the prelude to his enquiry on Piero della Francesca,
'My perspective is twofold: I am concerned with their commissioning, and with their iconography. I say nothing of the strictly formal aspects of the paintings, for, being an historian rather than an art historian, I lack the qualifications to do so. This is a serious limitation; it will be asked whether an investigation whose scope is thus confined can arrive at relevant conclusions. I believe that it can, both for reasons pertaining specifically to the nature of the research into Piero's work, and for reasons of a more general kind.'
(Ginzburg 1985: 7)

8 'Our things define us. What we buy, what we use, what we keep and throw away, what we waste and what we save: the stuff that surrounds us and flows through our lives is a key indicator of the kinds of lives we're living. To be an affluent twenty-first-century person is to float on a sea of material objects – each with its own history and future'. (Steffen 2007: 29)

9 The letter is currently kept at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney and belongs to the Whiteley Estate.

10 For instance, the hand is prominent as a narrative element in a number of paintings, among them *New York 2* (1968), *The American Dream* (1968-69), *Blue naked studio* (1981), *Henri's armchair* (1974-75), *Self-portrait in the studio* (1976), *Not I – me* (1967), and many others. See Peirce 1995.

11 See Waldmann 1982: 213-36 and Hunt 1994.

12 In some cases Whiteley invited (by painting arrows, for instance) the viewer to read his paintings from right to left, as in Asian tradition - and particularly Japanese - tradition.

13 Three years earlier, Whiteley had painted a caged *Sacred baboon* of similar size, and featuring an open mouth, and almost human hands (Peirce 1995: plate 113).

14 1943 Archibald winner was William Dobell with a portrait of Joshua Smith. The painting was so distorted that it expanded the concept of what could be a portrait, and abstract interpretations as well as conventional portraits were subsequently submitted.

15 At the end of our analysis of panel 1, a pseudo figure of speech is left. *Quotation | Citazione*: 1. the act of quoting; 2. an explicit reference or allusion in an artistic work to a passage or element from another, usually well-known work. In panel 1. Dylan Thomas's quote appears in the top right corner; 2. Whiteley loudly quotes Francis Bacon's style.

16 Dobell's drawing also constitutes a pictorial *Quotation | Citazione*.

17 The word derives from the Greek word *antonomazein* and means "to name differently".

18 'When Andy Warhol composed his picture of thirty Mona Lisas, giving it the title *Thirty is better than one*, he referred to one essential characteristic of the being of cultural texts: multiplication, repetition in a similar form. […] Repetition is more significant than singularity' (Torop 2003).

19 Michael Cronin's notion of interdependency refers to the construction of identity via necessary mutual connections between *different* entities:
difference is essential to the construction of identity. The 'dialogical self' is a processual self who needs a continuous dialogue with others (who can of course be imaginary as well as real) in order to get a distinct sense of who he or she is and this process of endless recalibration can of course last a lifetime.
(Cronin 2006: 50)

The translation process displayed in this paper aims to make evident that the 'dialogical self' principle worked for Whiteley, as well as works for today's translator.

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