

# Domestication and Foreignisation in a Cognitively Estranged World

## The Application of Venuti's Framework to Science Fictional Texts

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### *Abstract*

Darko Suvin argues for an understanding of science fiction as the literature of 'cognitive estrangement'. This paper will take Suvin's notion as its starting point, examining extracts from two works by author Alain Damasio to demonstrate how his language can be considered 'typical' of the genre. It will then explore how two key elements of Damasio's language – neologisms and wordplays – have been translated, linking the strategies taken by the translators to Venuti's paradigm. It will ask the following key questions: to what extent have the translators foreignised or domesticated key elements of Damasio's language? And is it possible to either completely foreignise or domesticate features of science fiction if we want to maintain it as Suvin's literature of 'cognitive estrangement'?

### *Key Words*

Science fiction, foreignisation, domestication, cognitive estrangement, Damasio.



“Science fiction is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition.”

Darko Suvin (1979: 7-8)

### *Introduction*

In his 1979 seminal work *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, Suvin argues for an understanding of science fiction (SF) as the literature of ‘cognitive estrangement’. Here, Suvin means that SF authors work towards producing texts which provide readers with a reading experience which both challenges or alienates them in some regard, but which is also grounded and accessible based on their own environment and background. This is expressed in slightly different terms by Mandala (2010: 29), who asserts that the basic principle of SF is that it “works by making the familiar strange so that an audience can see and reflect on features or circumstances that are typically taken for granted, and so would otherwise go unnoticed”; a process of *defamiliarization* thus occurs for the reader. Suvin discusses this with regards to the reader’s implied ‘norms of reality’: he argues that the aim of SF is to deviate from and challenge these norms. When these norms of reality are contravened, Suvin refers to the result as a ‘novum’, defined by Reed (1981: 339) as “an innovation deviating from the reader’s norm of reality”. These ‘norms of reality’ apply mainly to the innovative content of SF works, “running from the minimum of one discrete new ‘invention’ to the maximum of a setting” (Suvin 1979: 64). However, the notion of novum can ultimately only exist because it is expressible through the medium of language. Familiar, everyday language is often an inadequate resource in this pursuit, and therefore may need to see its boundaries stretched into the estranged.

It is on the medium of language in SF that this article will focus. It will first expound on the notion of cognitive estrangement and pinpoint precisely how language is used by SF authors. It will relate this to the work of Alain Damasio in his two major works *La Zone du Dehors* and *La Horde du Contrevent*, analysing how the language of the source texts can be considered to be ‘representative’ of the genre. We will then progress to examine how these features have been translated in two extracts from the novels and whether the feeling of ‘cognitive estrangement’ has been retained in the translations. The approaches taken by the translators of the aforementioned works will be linked to Venuti’s paradigm of foreignisation and domestication and will lead us towards

answering the following key research question: to what extent can translators draw upon Venuti's approaches of foreignisation and domestication if they want to ensure that the cognitive estrangement of the source texts is retained in translation?

### *Section 1 – Exploration of Cognitive Estrangement*

Suvin's work on cognitive estrangement has been built upon by subsequent scholars in the field. Roberts (2006: 7-8) breaks the notion down into two separate ideas of cognition and estrangement: "Cognition', with its rational, logical implications, refers to that aspect of SF that prompts us to try and understand, to comprehend, the alien landscape of a given SF book. 'Estrangement' [...] refers to that element of SF that we recognise as different, that 'estranges' us from the familiar and the everyday". Roberts' definition, much like Mandala's, ultimately presents cognitive estrangement as *defamiliarization within the familiar*. If SF were only interested in defamiliarizing, Roberts claims that "we would not be able to understand it" (ibid.), whilst if it were totally interested in rendering everything 'familiar', "it would be scientific or documentary rather than science fiction" (ibid.). This distinction is rephrased by Freedman who speaks about the importance of SF works not simply being 'flattened out' to one dimension or the other: "if the dialectic is flattened out to mere cognition, then the result is 'realistic' or mundane fiction, which can cognitively account for its imaginings, but performs no estrangement; if the dialectic is flattened out to mere estrangement, then the result is fantasy, which estranges [...], but in an irrationalist, theoretically illegitimate way" (Freedman 2000: 17).

Langlet terms it yet differently still: the work of the SF author, she argues, is the pursuit of the *principe d'écart minimal* – the principle of minimal difference. According to Langlet (2006: 37), this means that elements of estrangement, "pour rester tout simplement lisibles, ne peuvent se comprendre que par rapport à des référents qui demeurent stables"<sup>1</sup>. Estrangement can thus only be achieved in the context of cognition. If there is no cognition, then the result is no longer estrangement, but rather a text which is not possible to comprehend.

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<sup>1</sup> The author's translation: "To ensure that they remain above all readable, elements of science fictional estrangement can only be understood if they stand in relation to references which remain stable and relatable".

This is precisely what Saint-Gelais (2005: 225) refers to as the balancing act between a ‘sense of wonder’ and a ‘sense of reading’, between pushing the reader into a wondrous world, but also maintaining cognition. Suvin’s notion of cognitive estrangement has clearly had a great impact on future works in the academic field of SF, but a key question remains unanswered: how is cognitive estrangement *mis en scène* through language?

### *Section 2 – Cognitive Estrangement and Language*

Myers speaks about the use of language in SF as a balancing act between cognition and estrangement, contending that it is crucial to establish “the ‘otherness’ of language, so as to erect convincing barriers to communication”, nonetheless constantly bearing in mind that the text must “be predominately in the language of the audience” (Myers 1983: 306). SF authors thus walk a tightrope between cognition and estrangement, but often place emphasis – perhaps unintentionally – on the cognitive element of language, insisting on it being understandable. Stockwell (2000: 51) points out that such focus on cognition has often been considered ‘stylistic pedestrianism’; nonetheless, he believes that it can “easily be explained as a necessary antidote to the wildness of the conceptual content [... or] a rhetorical ploy to assist in establishing the verisimilitude of the extrapolated world”. In other words, if the content of the work is overwhelmingly estranging, then the language needs to counterbalance this with cognition. Freedman (2000: 37) takes this further and contends that it is the way that the ‘ordinary’ language and the estranging content work together which produces a ‘routine commodification’ of the SF world. In other words, the content provides most of the estrangement; the language needs to bring that estrangement back to the familiar.

Nonetheless, in their balancing act between cognition and estrangement, authors may have to extend the ‘normal’ constraints of familiar language. Indeed, as Samuel Delany asserts (1984: 29), the various devices SF writers use “to lay out, sketch in, and colour their alternative world, as well as the verbal constructs that direct the play between the world and the story, constitute the major distinctions between the SF and the mundane text”. Some features of language are used to emphasise the ‘points of differentiation’, as Stockwell terms it, between the fictional universe and our own reality. Cheyne (2008: 389), for example, discusses the authors’ use of “a few well-placed new words” and claims that such neologisms can have “as significant an effect as

thoroughly imagined, rich linguistic innovation”. Bould adds that the creation of these new worlds also implicates the use of “new syntactic structures [and] new semantic connections” (Bould 2009: 220). It is on such deviations from standard, familiar language that the article will now focus in the context of French SF author Alain Damasio’s works.

### *Section 3 – Damasio’s use of language*

Alain Damasio is a big name on the SF scene: FNAC, for example, has Damasio on a list of ten all-time greats, one of only three French authors amongst the likes of Orwell, Adams and Asimov (FNAC 2020). *Le Point* equally lists Damasio in their article on not-to-miss SF works appearing in the 2000s (Chéry 2019). The two works which we will analyse here are his two most successful: *La Zone du Dehors* and *La Horde du Contrevent*. The former was published in 1999 and was Damasio’s first major success. In the novel, inspired by Orwell’s *1984*, the main character leads a movement fighting back against the current ‘democratic’ government which monitors the citizens of the planet of *Cerclon*. *La Horde du Contrevent* was first published in 2004 and introduces us to a group of people, *La Horde*, with a single aim: to travel the world from west to east, attempting to reach the mythical *Extrême-Amont*, the source of all of the winds. These are the two Damasio novels for which I had access to translations: the translation of chapter 1 of *La Horde du Contrevent*, translated by Alexander Dickow, freely available online, and the translation of chapter 10 of *La Zone du Dehors*, translated by myself. To the best of my knowledge, these are the only English-language translations of Damasio’s works in existence.

Both novels are also representative of the language of SF, with a generally ‘prosaic’ delivery supplemented by non-standard linguistic features. Indeed, as Gesbert (2019) points out, Damasio insists on drawing out “la dimension évocative de l’écriture qui devrait porter en elle l’idée même de métamorphose, à l’image de la réalité elle-même”<sup>2</sup>. Damasio has himself spoken about his use of language, and more importantly about how he uses the French language to indicate otherness: he outlines (in Gesbert 2019) that it is important to “trouver à l’intérieur du français quelque chose qui va indiquer en dehors du français, c’est-à-dire qui va nous indiquer un autre monde au-delà du français

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<sup>2</sup> The author's translation: “The evocative nature of writing which itself should contribute to this notion of metamorphosis from our own perceptions of reality”.

familier qu'on connaît"<sup>3</sup>. In other words, language itself needs to lose its familiarity in order to evoke another world which is different from what we know. Damasio (ibid.) adds that language is ultimately the key to anchoring the estranged world in a cognitive narrative, giving that other world its credibility: "Quand on bâtit des mondes, [...] il faut spécifier un langage propre. Ça permet notamment d'ancrer une crédibilité forte de l'univers avec des néologismes adéquats"<sup>4</sup>.

Neologisms are one of the main aspects of Damasio's works that readers notice: for example, Mortier (2016: 28) contends that Damasio "invente tout un vocabulaire pour dire le vent et son contre"<sup>5</sup>, whilst Philouze-Rousseau (2019) also praises Damasio's use of neologisms: "le lecteur se délectera ainsi de petites merveilles littéraires comme 'périféerie', 'conforteresse', 'mécánide' ou encore 'radicolo'"<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, other elements of Damasio's language stand out as being defamiliarizing. His work also contains "jeux-de-mots à tour de bras" (Winter 2019) – all kinds of wordplay – as well as "les metathèses, les interventions de syllabes, [et] les déformations" (Damasio on 28 Minutes, ARTE 2019) – metathesis, reversals of syllables, and deformations of language. All of these features have the effect of once more defamiliarizing the reader within an otherwise cognitive narrative and contribute to the estrangement of the source texts. The article will now analyse how two such aspects of Damasio's language – neologisms and wordplays – have been translated. The justification for choosing these aspects is that they immediately signpost to the reader that they are in an estranged world, far from the familiar French that they know and use, a world where language has been pushed beyond its conventional boundaries. We will explore what techniques the translators have adopted and link these to Venuti's paradigm of foreignisation and domestication.

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<sup>3</sup> The author's translation: "To find something *within* the French language which will point towards something *beyond* that very language. What I mean by that is something which will point to another world which uses a different French to the French that we know and use".

<sup>4</sup> The author's translation: "When we create an *other* world, we also need to create an *other* language. This allows us to give the universe a certain credibility, particularly through the use of suitable neologisms".

<sup>5</sup> The author's translation: "Damasio invents a completely new vocabulary to describe the *vent* and its *contre*".

<sup>6</sup> The author's translation: "The reader will delight in such wonderful literary marvels as [all neologisms]".

*Section 4 – Venuti's Foreignisation and Domestication*

Venuti's translation framework builds upon an 1813 lecture given by Schleiermacher, who argued that "there are only two [methods of translation]. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Schleiermacher in Lefevere 1977: 74). The former refers to what Venuti terms *foreignisation*, attempting to "signify the difference of the foreign text [...] by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language" (Venuti 1995: 20); in other words, the translator challenges the language and cultural expectations of the target reader, deviating from their norms, in order to "stage an alien reading experience" (ibid.). On the flip side, if the translator moves the author towards the reader, Venuti calls this an act of *domestication*, a translation in which "a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers" (Shuttleworth and Cowie 2011: 43). This approach would involve such strategies as "the adaptation of the TT to conform to target discourse types and [...] the general harmonization of the TT with TL preconceptions and preferences" (ibid.: 44).

If, then, a translator domesticates a text in translation, they aim to make it natural for the target reader; if, on the other hand, they choose to foreignise the text, they will deviate from norms and produce a translation which is alien to the target reader. But how can we, as translators, productively apply these two approaches if we want to achieve both naturalness and defamiliarization, as is the case for SF texts in which a blending of cognition, of the natural with the estranged, the alien already exists in the source text? If a translator takes a foreignising approach to a cognitively estranged source text, will the target text then be pure estrangement? Vice versa, if a translator takes a domesticating approach to the same text, will it pale into pure cognition? Treating these two approaches as complete binary opposites would be entirely problematic, as Venuti himself acknowledges (in Munday 2012: 220). Tymoczko (1999: 289), in her discussion of Venuti's work, also asserts that translations are always to be "regarded as hybrids, as complex, polyphonic blends of the domestic and the foreign, of the familiar and the strange, of otherness and self-ness". This hybridisation becomes particularly important in the translation of SF where it is precisely the mixing of the familiar and the strange which characterises the genre. How then can Venuti's framework be productively used to guide translators through the strange waters of SF works? The article will now

analyse what the two translators have done in practice to deal with cognitively estranging elements of Damasio’s language.

*Section 5 – Neologisms*

As Wozniak outlines, it is “safe to assert that neologisms are paramount in the vocabulary of science fiction” (Wozniak 2014: 4). However, the fact that ordinary everyday language frequently gets “replaced by a new jargon immediately makes the task of translating those works doubly complex” (Parraga 2014: 95). Cacija and Markovic (2018: 202) believe that it is the “duty [of the translator] to create any neologism [s]he meets on the basis of the SL neologism” and Kovel (2016: 7) outlines that if the word has not been translated to its full potential, readers may “fail to experience the entire range of meanings [...] that were intended by the author of the source text”. This applies none-more-so than to SF texts in which a key element of cognitive estrangement would be lost if the neologism were not recreated. What, though, can the translator do to ensure that they retain the estranging nature of the neologism, whilst guaranteeing that it still ‘fits’ into the cognitive framework of the target reader? Stockwell (2000: 3-4) believes that it is first important to identify what forms the neologisms take from his detailed typology of neologism:

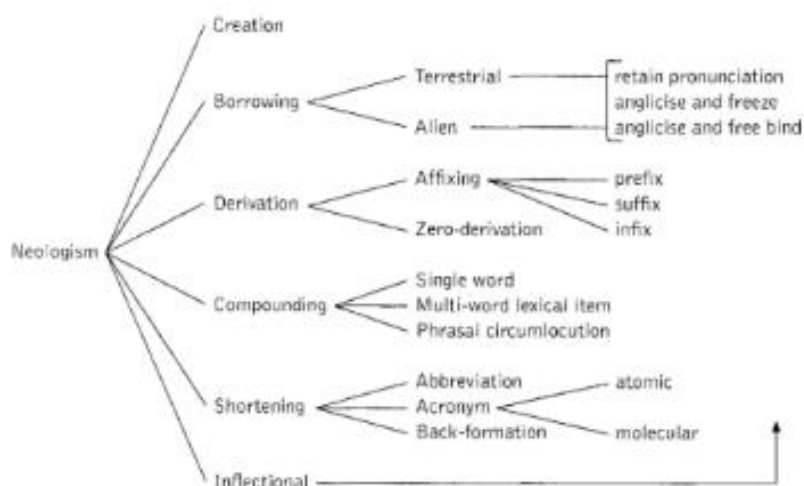


Figure 1: Stockwell’s detailed typology of neologism in SF (taken from Stockwell, 2000: 124).



Drawing upon Stockwell's text typology model, it becomes possible to classify almost all of the neologisms that Damasio uses in Chapter 1 of *La Horde du Contrevent* and Chapter 10 of *La Zone du Debors*. However, during the process of categorising the neologisms, it became clear that an additional category was required – that of *défigement* at word level. This term comes from the idea of *figement*, a process, as pointed out by Lecler (2007: 44), by which the meaning of a word is fixed or “par lequel un groupe de mots dont les éléments sont libres devient une expression dont les éléments sont indissociables”<sup>7</sup>. *Défigement*, therefore, is where one of these fixed words or expressions is slightly altered, but still brings the original word or expression to mind. Here, we are going to focus on the *défigement* at the level of individual words and compound words. Examples of *défigement* working at word level to create neologisms can be observed in both of Damasio's works. In *La Horde du Contrevent*, we see *drakkaair*, which comes from the term *drakkar* (longboat); *chat-volant* based on the phrase *cerf-volant* (kite); *vent-comme-je-te-pousse*, from the fixed expression *va-comme-je-te-pousse* (in a haphazard/slapdash manner); and *philosov* from the fixed word *philosophe* (philosopher). In *La Zone du Debors*, we also come across this kind of process too: Damasio invents the term *intellectueur*, having implications of being intellectual and a murderer, a change from the term *intellectuel* (an intellectual, academic).

This category of neologism is similar to the other four processes of linguistic morphology in Stockwell's typology – derivation, compounding, shortening and inflection. All five of these categories are developed to some extent within the framework of cognitive estrangement: they are derived from words that the target readers are already familiar with, thus cognition is achieved; however, these neologisms are still estranging, as the reader is aware that the author has extended language beyond its usual constraints. The vast majority of the neologisms used in Damasio's extracts fall into these five categories: 66.7% of the neologisms in *La Zone du Debors* and 63.3% of the neologisms in *La Horde du Contrevent*. Nonetheless, the largest individual category of neologisms across both of Damasio's works is creation. Of course, this type of neologism is the most explicitly estranging out of all of the neological categories, sending the readers to a different world.

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<sup>7</sup> The author's translation: “By which a group of words, the individual elements of which are *free*, become an accepted expression, the individual elements of which cannot be separated”.

How, though, should translators go about translating these neologisms in order to reproduce aspects of cognition and estrangement? Newmark outlines various procedures for translating neologisms, seven of which are particularly pertinent here, as follows (from Newmark 1988: 150): *transference*, the process of transferring the word to the target language with no changes; *naturalisation*, adapting the word to the pronunciation and morphological norms of the target language; *literal translation*, translating derived forms literally; *through translation*, translating compounded forms word-for-word; *description*, describing the notion referred to by the neologism; *recognised target language translation*, using a term that already exists in the target language to match the neologism; and *target language neologism/derived word*, creating a new neologism in the target language based on the meaning of the neologism. Of course, depending upon which techniques the translator adopts in their practice, the result and effect on the reader may be vastly different. For these two chapters of Damasio's works, the translators have drawn upon a combination of Newmark's seven strategies to translate the neologisms in the source text. However, two extra techniques have needed to be added to Newmark's suggestions – that of making a different word the neologism and of *défigement* in the target language. I will now analyse each of Stockwell's categories of neologism in turn in an attempt to identify patterns regarding which of Newmark's techniques have been adopted in translation.

*Creation*: four out of the five created terms in *La Zone du Debors* have been translated using two of Newmark's more source-oriented methods of translation: transference (this is the case for 'Cerclon', 'Volte', and 'Cablaxie'), and naturalisation (in this case *nésears* becoming 'nesears'). The estrangement here is thus retained through an approach based around foreignisation, particularly in light of the fact that the reader might recognise the target language form as a non-English word that may have meaning in the language from which they originate. A similar picture emerges in the translation of Chapter 1 of *La Horde du Contrevent*: eight out of the ten 'created' neologisms have also been translated using some of the more source-oriented translation approaches: transference in the case of 'derbidil', 'slamino', 'blaast', 'Rivek Dar', and 'Aberlaas'; naturalisation for 'Freole' (from *Fréole*); and through translation for both 'Lascini effect' and 'Bellini axis', from *effet Lascini* and *axe Bellini* respectively. Once more, the approach taken by the translator moves the translation towards the foreignising end of the spectrum, and the estrangement remains intact, if in a slightly different manner, for the target reader.

The creations *frication* in *La Zone du Debors* and *épianté* and *babéole* in *La Horde du Contrevent* have been translated using more domesticating techniques. *Frication* is

domesticated to a recognised existing target language term, ‘fricative’, as is *épiauté*, which simply becomes ‘flayed’. Here, the target language terms move from cognitive estrangement in the source text to almost complete cognition in the target text. Nonetheless, this is not to say that a domesticating translation approach always results in a completely cognitive effect on the target reader. The only creation across the two texts which receives its own new target language creation is *babéole* which becomes ‘furbellows’. This approach has entailed domestication rather more than the translation approaches adopted for the other creations; however, the result appears to be the most estranging of all of the neologisms. Indeed, the closest existing word in English to this created term is ‘furbelow’, meaning a strip or border on a skirt or dress, completely different to the meaning of *babéole* (an item worn in the hair resembling a miniscule windmill). In this instance, what appears to be a domesticating approach taken by the translator has ultimately resulted in the target text becoming more estranging, and less cognitive, than the source text. This is a first indication that adopting a domesticating approach in translating a term does not always mean that it will become more cognitive in the target language compared to the source language.

*Borrowing:* *Starlight* and *dissent*, both borrowings from English in *La Zone du Debors*, are simply retained in the English translation. *Schnee* in *La Horde du Contrevent* is a slightly different case: this is a borrowing from the German word for snow. Dickow has simply used transference and retained the word in the target language. This is a complex case with regards to Venuti’s framework and to cognitive estrangement. Ultimately, the two translators have used the same translation technique and simply reproduced the words as they stood in the source language. Nonetheless, the words *Starlight* and *dissent* would clearly have no estranging effect on the reader; they would pale into complete cognition, and thus have a domesticating, naturalising effect. *Schnee*, on the other hand, given that it is not originally an English word, would maintain the foreignising effect on the reader and therefore still achieve estrangement. Once more, we see a disconnect between the approach taken by the translator and the effect that it has on the target reader.

*Derivation:* all of the derivational neologisms in *La Zone du Debors* and *La Horde du Contrevent* have been translated using one of Newmark’s more source-oriented translation techniques: naturalisation, through translation or literal translation. All nine of these terms remain either derivational or are compounds in the target language, thus allowing the reader to draw on their previous experience of language to get a sense of the meaning: *géodôme* is

naturalised to ‘geodome’; *holospectateurs* is through translated to ‘holovision viewers’; *Cerclonniens* is naturalised to ‘Cerclonians’ (with Cerclon being a creation having previously been introduced in the translation); *nova-filles* is literally translated to ‘novagirls’; *protoplanètes* is literally translated to ‘protoplanets’; *géomâtre* and *aéromâtre* are also literally translated to ‘geomasters’ and ‘aeromasters’ respectively; *antéchrones* becomes naturalised to the target language term ‘antechrones’; whilst *bordaille* and *bordier* are literally translated to ‘hordling’ and ‘horder’ respectively. Cognitive estrangement is thus retained through near replication of the source language neologisms, with morphological adjustments that are common in the target language. The cognition here comes from the translators playing on the reader’s grasp and experience of linguistic morphological processes that they may have encountered before (for example, adding “ian” to a word to turn it from a place into a person); nonetheless, the estrangement comes through the novel use of these elements in the resultant derived or compounded phrase. The retention of cognitive estrangement has here required a mix of foreignisation and domestication: foreignisation in replicating as closely as possible how the terms worked in the source language, but also domestication in altering the individual elements of the neologisms to bring them more in line with the target reader’s experience of how English works.

*Compounding*: here, we see the translators take vastly different approaches, with varying effects on the target reader. In the translation of *La Zone du Dehors*, I continued to draw upon through translation for all five of the compounded neologisms. *Procès-vérité*, *brise-champ*, *soleil d’homme*, *après-survie*, and *impaffect* thus become ‘truth trial’, ‘fieldbreak’, ‘sun of man’, ‘aftersurvival’, and ‘impact affect’ respectively. The estrangement is retained, with new compounds created for the target reader, but using language which is familiar to them. Alexander Dickow, on the other hand, takes an entirely different approach in *La Horde du Contrevent*. Indeed, only two of the neologisms in the source text are translated using through translation and naturalisation: *Contrevent* becomes ‘counterwind’ and *pharéole* becomes ‘phareola’. In this case, we see Dickow taking a foreignising approach for both neologisms, replicating the source language terms as closely as possible. However, the effect of his approach on the target reader is different in both cases. *Counterwind* is both cognitive and estranging – it is a term that the reader has not necessarily come across before, but it takes minimal effort to process. *Phareola*, on the other hand, is purely estranging; there is no way for the reader to dissect the word into linguistic units, unlike the French original (*pharéole* being a compound of *phare* meaning beacon and

*éole* coming from *éolienne*, a wind turbine or windmill). What was initially cognitive estrangement for the French reader is now only estrangement to the target reader, due to Dickow's foreignising approach. Even though the translator has taken a foreignising approach for both neologisms, their *effect* on the target reader is entirely different.

For the other five compounded neologisms in *La Horde du Contrevent*, Dickow takes a more target-oriented approach. Three are translated using a target language-derived neologism: *percute-souffle* thus becomes 'gustguzzling', whilst *vélichar* becomes 'velicar'. The other compounded neologism which becomes a newly derived term in the target language, *furvent*, is the one which gave Dickow the most trouble. As Dickow points out (2017), he and Damasio spent several hours discussing dozens of possible alternatives here, before settling on the term 'threshgale'. Dickow goes on to assert that "the neologism retains neither component [of the French neologism i.e. *fur* from *furieux*, the word for angry, and *vent*, the French word for wind], preferring winnowing and thrashing to fury, and the storm or gale in place of the mere wind" (ibid.). We thus have an example where the translator has attempted to domesticate the original at a lexical level, producing a term which can be cognitively processed by the reader, but the effect of which is just as estranging, if not more so, than the other neologisms. The two other compounded neologisms in *La Horde du Contrevent* are, on the other hand, translated using a recognised target language term (with *Extrême-Amont* and *Extrême-Aval* becoming 'Upper Reaches' and 'Lower Reaches' respectively). Both of the above techniques used by Dickow are domesticating to some extent, yet their impact on the reader is vastly different. The derived neologisms in the target language, even though they are produced by a domesticating approach, push the translation further to the estranging end of the spectrum than the source text did, whereas the recognised target language terms become less estranging than the neologisms in the source text, paling into mere cognition.

*Shortening*: Only one neologism in *La Zone du Debors* is a shortened neologism, namely *jectez*, a shortening of the second person plural form *éjectez*. In translation, this becomes naturalised to "ject", retaining the estrangement of the piece, as this term is not a commonly used one for the target reader, but ensuring that it remains within their cognitive framework, allowing them to easily relate to the shortened form of the verb 'eject'. Once more, we see a delicate balancing act between domestication and foreignisation in achieving cognitive estrangement here.

*Inflectional:* The inflectional neologisms are amongst the most difficult to translate. In French, it is relatively simple to move between different parts of speech, as the neologisms used by Damasio demonstrate: *s'holographier* (verb) develops from the noun *holographe* (holograph); *avachi* as a noun develops from the verb *avachir* (to slouch); *feuleuse* as a noun comes from the verb *feuler* (to yowl); *pavasse* is the first person singular imperfect subjunctive of the verb *paver* (to pave), but becomes a noun in the neological form as used by Damasio; whilst *rafalant* is used as a noun with a present participle verbal ending, when *rafale* might be the more common French word to come across for 'gust'. In the translation of *La Zone du Dehors*, the translator encounters the neologisms *s'holographier* and *avachi*. The translator here uses the techniques of description and a TL recognised term to translate these neologisms respectively: *s'holographier* becomes 'a holograph appears', whilst *l'avachi* is translated as 'the slouch', an accepted term in phrases such as 'to be no slouch'. Here, then, estrangement is almost entirely lost, because the two neologisms have been domesticated and brought completely back to cognition.

In the translation of *La Horde du Contrevent*, we can observe that something similar has occurred: *feuleuse* is translated as 'kindler', a term listed in prestigious dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster, and *pavasse*, originally from the complex French verb form, simply becomes 'slab'. Once more, the two terms have been domesticated to some extent and almost all of the estrangement has been lost. On the other hand, Dickow adopts a more foreignising approach when dealing with the neologism *rafalant*, but only because the morphology of English allows it. As previously mentioned, *rafalant* comes from the noun *rafale*. *Rafale* is first turned into the verb *rafaler*, in turn transformed into the present participle form *rafalant*, then used as a noun itself. Dickow translates *rafale* to 'gust', this then becomes the verb 'to gust', and the final noun that he settles on is actually the present participle verb form 'gusting'. Hence, rather than using the completely cognitive noun 'gust', the translator has here achieved an estranging effect by adopting a mixture of a domesticating and a foreignising approach, taking an everyday English term, but applying similar inflectional derivation as present in the source text.

*Défigement:* Here, the translator faces real difficulty in their attempts to retain the cognitive estrangement of the original neologisms. In *La Zone du Dehors*, the translator has attempted to move the play on words from the noun to the adjective. This is the context of the original: *intellectuel inspiré et intellectueur sanglant*. The play on words here comes from the mixing of *intellectuel* (an academic, an intellectual) and the word *tueur* (a killer) to form a new term to

describe the main protagonist. The translator has slightly shifted the play on words from the noun *intellectueur* to the adjective which describes the noun; the translation of this phrase thus becomes ‘an inspired academic and an academacabre murderer’. This manages to achieve cognitive estrangement, even if the phrase feels a little awkward; the cognition comes from the mixing of pre-existing words, whilst the reader is estranged by the play on words itself. This strategy has implicated both foreignisation and domestication to achieve cognitive estrangement: foreignisation in drawing upon a similar play on words to the original, but domestication in how that play on words is achieved.

In *La Horde du Contrevent*, Dickow uses three different approaches. *Drakkair* is subject to Newmark’s method of transference and thus remains ‘drakkair’ in translation. The translator has used a foreignising approach here, and the effect of this has been a translation which seems to be even more estranging than the original text. The reference of *drakkair* to *drakkar* (a longboat) in the original text has been retained in the target language, as ‘drakar’ is a word used to refer to the same thing in English; however, the word ‘drakar’ is borrowed from the French term and is not used at all commonly. It is therefore not certain that general target readers would be able to cognitively process the transferred neologism in the same way that the French reader would have been able to. *Chat-volant* is translated using a target-language neologism, ‘hop-cat’. *Chat-volant* is a reference to *cerf-volant* in the original text; the translation adopted by Dickow loses the play on words entirely through the foreignising approach he has taken. Once more, the final result is more estranging than the original. Whilst a French reader can readily imagine what Damasio means by *chat-volant* thanks to its close resemblance to a *cerf-volant*, the British reader has to do much more work here to understand what the translation is getting at. The other two neologisms classified into this category in the source language have been translated using *défigement* in the target language. *Vent-comme-je-te-pousse* becomes ‘any old howl’, a slight alteration to the phrase ‘any old how’, which might have been a standard translation for the French *va-comme-je-te-pousse*. Dickow here draws upon a domesticating approach on a lexical level, but is nonetheless successful in achieving cognitive estrangement: cognition from the set phrase ‘any old how’, with estrangement from the change to ‘howl’. We see a similar thing with Dickow’s translation of Damasio’s *philosov*, a combination of *philosophe* and character name *Sov*: Dickow uses the adjective ‘philosophical’ and inserts *Sov*’s name to make ‘philosovical’. Both cognition and estrangement are retained through this translation, too, which is both domesticating and foreignising.

It has become clear through this section on the translation of neologisms that there is a problematic relationship between the use of foreignising and domesticating approaches taken by the translator and their actual effect in reading science-fictional texts. When the translators have drawn upon Newmark's more target-oriented, domesticating approaches for translating neologisms, this does not necessarily produce a more cognitive effect on the reader than what was present in the source text. Indeed, some of the most domesticating approaches have had the most estranging effect on the target reader (see 'furbellows' and 'threshgale'). And the same applies with regards to foreignising approaches: just because a translator adopts these does not necessarily mean that they will produce a more estranging effect on the target reader than the source text did on the source reader. Often, the resultant translations from such approaches are more easily able to be cognitively processed by the target reader than the domesticated terms. It has been shown, much like Venuti has previously asserted, that it is not productive to treat foreignisation and domestication as binary opposites regarding their effect on the target reader.

#### *Section 6 – Wordplay at phrasal level*

Delbatista (1993: 57) defines wordplay as follows: "the general name indicating the various textual phenomena in which certain features inherent in the structure of the language used are exploited in such a way as to establish a communicatively significant, (near-)simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings and more or less similar forms". We have already seen, in this regard, how Damasio uses wordplay at lexical level in his creation of neologisms to contribute to the estranging feeling of his texts; nonetheless, the French author also uses wordplay at phrasal level for a similar effect. Katharina Reiss (1971: 63) believes that in any expressive or literary text (what she refers to as a 'form-focussed text'), wordplays should be translated: "Wortspiele [...] brauchen in einem inhaltsbetonten Text nicht nachgestaltet zu werden, wenn sie sich nicht zufällig im gegebenen Sprachenpaar von selbst ergeben. In einem formbetonten Text, würde man ihre Nachgestaltung erwarten"<sup>8</sup>. Given how

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<sup>8</sup> The author's translation: "Wordplays generally do not need to be reproduced in a content-focussed text if the target language does not simply happen to have a similar



crucial Damasio's use of wordplay is in achieving cognitive estrangement in the source language, we would therefore probably expect the wordplays to be reproduced in some regard. But what have the translators done and how has this impacted on the effect of Damasio's texts?

In chapter 10 of *La Zone du Dehors*, we come across two such examples of wordplay: *prend cette odeur de souffre* and *l'homme en vie [...] éprouve et épreuve*. In the case of the former, the play on words comes from the use of *souffre* as a noun, generally the conjugated present tense form of the verb *souffrir* (to suffer). The estrangement of the original works on two levels: 1) to see *souffre* used as a noun form is estranging in itself; 2) it is a homonym of the word *soufre*, the French word for 'sulfur'. *Odeur de soufre* is a common collocation for sulfuric smell. We can thus observe an example of *défigement* operating at a phrasal level. The translator has in this instance made the connection more explicit than the original: 'takes on this odour of su(l)furing'. The original has been domesticated to some extent, as the estrangement now works on two different levels: 1) *sufuring* is an incorrect spelling, yet a near-homonym for the correct form *suffering*, retaining cognition; 2) the brackets in the middle of a word are very uncommon, yet manage to retain the reference to sulfur. Hence, the phrase *odour of su(l)furing* has an estranging effect, even though the way in which it works has been domesticated to common points of reference for the target reader.

In the example of *l'homme en vie [...] éprouve et épreuve*, the play on words comes from the use of two near-homonyms. *Éprouve* is from the verb *éprouver* (to feel), whilst *épreuve* is only ever encountered as a noun (a test). The play on words is achieved through Damasio's use of *épreuve* as a verb in the third person singular present form, matching up to the similar use of *éprouve*. The translator has attempted to match the technique of the original by opting for two near-homonyms; however, the overwhelmingly estranging part of the play on words, i.e. using a noun as a verb, is entirely lost: 'man, living, [...] feels and fails'. The reader might well pick up on the similarity between feels and fails, but the estrangement is lost due to the domesticating approach of the translator. Once again, the domesticating approaches taken by the translator here produce dramatically different effects on the target reader.

In chapter 1 of *La Horde du Contrevent*, we encounter five wordplays in the original text. Early on in the text, Damasio uses the phrase *troubadour donc – et*

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wordplay to the source language. However, in a form-focussed text, we would usually expect the wordplay to be reproduced".

*conteur*. *Pour le compte ?* when describing one of the characters. Here, Damasio's wordplay comes from the use of *conteur*, a person who tells stories or tales, in close proximity to the similar sounding word *compte* (account or count). Used in the phrase *pour le compte*, it means something like 'on behalf of'. Dickow here uses a very similar strategy to Damasio in his translation, retaining the pun, but by adding an extra phrase to the original: 'a troubadour, then – and teller of tales beyond count. On whose account?' 'Count' and 'account' are used here to retain the similarity between *conteur* and *compte*. Dickow has thus drawn upon a foreignising and domesticating approach to retain cognitive estrangement: foreignisation in the retention of the wordplay technique, mirroring the source text, but domestication in terms of how the phrase itself has been translated to ensure that it is in line with target reader expectations.

The next wordplay we encounter in the chapter is *on peut avaler prévenir les autres !* This is another example of *défigement* at phrasal level: we see here a mix in the French of the noun *aval* (downstream), the verb *avaler* (to swallow), and the common set phrase *aller prévenir* (to go and warn) into one expression: *avaler prévenir*. The translator opts for 'we can downstream to warn the others!'; this translation loses the notion of *défigement*, and domesticates the original, in the sense that there is no word in the English translation which resembles another. Nonetheless, the use of 'downstream' as a verb is not common and therefore still manages to have an ultimately estranging effect. The translation of the third wordplay in the chapter, however, has a less estranging effect than the original. Damasio employs the expression *la pluie va arriver très vite. Écoutez-moi : on contre en goutte !*, drawing once more upon *défigement* at phrasal level: not only does Damasio use *goutte* (droplet) in close proximity to *la pluie* (the rain), but *contre en goutte* is also a pun on the compound word *compte-gouttes* (dropper, e.g. eye dropper). *Contre en goutte* itself means something like 'in the shape of a droplet', but the fact that *compte-gouttes* is also evoked by the *défigement* adds the idea that this is done with caution. The reference between rain and droplet has been reproduced in Dickow's translation here: 'the rain is going to come very soon. Listen: we counter in droplet formation'. Indeed, the translation seems to be rather foreignising in its resemblance of the original; however, the reference to *compte-gouttes* has been completely lost by the use of 'droplet formation'. The effect is thus not as estranging as the source text despite the foreignising approach taken.

The fourth wordplay is *Comment savoir, par le Saint Souffle ?*, which functions on a biblical level; it is based on a famous biblical phrase: *Le vent souffle où il veut* (the wind blows where it wishes), with *l'Esprit Saint* (the holy spirit) often being

compared to the wind. Here, rather than having *l'Esprit Saint souffle* (the holy spirit blows), with *souffle* as the verb, Damasio instead uses *Souffle* as a noun, and combines that with *Saint*, resulting in the phrase *Saint Souffle*. In translation, Dickow retains the play on words, but with a different reference, one which would be more appropriate for his target audience. This results in a translation of 'Blessed Breath, who knows'. It keeps the religious allusion, but this time to 'blessed bread'. British readers are more likely to know this reference than to make the connection between 'blowing' and the wind. Dickow has thus domesticated the reference to some extent, yet cognitive estrangement is still retained, as 'blessed breath' is not a common collocation, but can still be deciphered within the target reader's cognitive framework.

The final wordplay in this chapter is *Furvent, ceux qui vont mûrir te saluent !* Here, Damasio uses an established phrase *ceux qui vont mourir te saluent !*, but again adopts the process of *défigement* to replace *mourir* (to die) with *mûrir* (to mature). The established phrase was allegedly said to emperor Claudius by gladiators before battles and comes from the Latin *morituri te salutamus*. Here, Dickow makes the translation more estranging for the target reader than the original: he adopts the original Latin phrase, but changes 'morituri' to 'maturaturi' to encapsulate Damasio's original pun. The resulting translation is 'Threshgale, maturaturi, te salutamus!', an expression which completely loses the cognition of the French due to the foreignising approach that Dickow has chosen to adopt. The fact that Dickow's translation implies that Latin exists in the world that has been created further contributes to the estrangement of the piece. Foreignisation, in this instance, leads to a loss of cognition and moves the text towards pure estrangement. This whole section on wordplay once more points to the problematic nature of treating domestication and foreignisation as binary opposites, with the effects of each approach being vastly different depending on what precisely is being translated.

### *Conclusions*

Throughout this paper, it has become evident that, much like Venuti has previously argued, the approaches of foreignisation and domestication should not be treated as essentially binary opposites. Indeed, the relationship between the domesticating and foreignising approaches taken by translators and the effect that such approaches have on the target reader is more complex than one might immediately assume. For SF texts, it is simply not the case that a

domesticating approach taken by the translator will result in complete naturalness and fluency, whilst a foreignising approach will push the translation towards the alien end of the scale. As we have seen, it is often the more domesticating translation approaches taken by the translators which have produced the most estranging of effects; Dickow's translation of the neologism *babéole* as 'furbellows' immediately springs to mind as the most convincing example to support this point. Nonetheless, some of the domesticating approaches have lost the element of estrangement, whereby the estranging elements of the original text pale into pure cognition for the target reader. But we can equally observe that a similar thing applies to foreignisation: on those occasions where the translators have taken a more foreignising approach, it is not simply guaranteed that estrangement will be achieved, or indeed that cognition will accompany it.

The findings of this study thus point towards a much more complex situation in which adopting a foreignising or domesticating *approach* may result in an entirely different *effect* on the target reader depending on the word or expression which is being translated, particularly when the source text is estranging in the first place. This adds weight to the argument that we should not regard Venuti's approaches as binary opposites; rather, we should treat them as guidelines which translators may have to draw upon in different measures in order to formulate an appropriate translation strategy whereby, as Tymoczko puts it, the target text itself becomes some kind of hybrid text, a blend of the foreign and the domestic. With genres such as SF, for example, where many elements of the text are simultaneously cognitive and estranging, where it is precisely this mixture of the familiar with the strange that defines the genre, the texts will be resistant to the traditional source-text vs. target-text binary dichotomy; as we have seen throughout this paper, translators may ultimately have to take a creative approach and draw upon a balance of such approaches to produce a just translation.

This article has been limited in its scope: indeed, it has only examined two translations of two chapters of two SF texts – and this should not be underestimated. However, it may serve as a springboard for future research into shaping our understanding of the somewhat underestimated complexity of the traditional translation frameworks, often regarded as binary dichotomies. Future researchers could examine the translations of other works of SF to analyse the kind of approaches that translators have taken in order to attempt to retain the cognitive estrangement of the original, or indeed evaluate the applications of Venuti's foreignisation/domestication paradigm to genres

which are inherently estranging, perhaps even more so than SF, such as fantasy, attempting to determine to what extent foreignising and domesticating approaches can be drawn upon by translators to produce a target text which remains true to its genre.

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