

Translating Science Fiction: a Dystopian Task?

Javier Martín Párraga
Universidad de Córdoba
javier.martin@uco.es

Fecha de recepción: 13.06.2013
Fecha de aceptación: 25.02.2014

Abstract: Even science fiction is certainly an ambiguous category, it wouldn't be exaggerated to assert that it is one of the most popular genres within the second half of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty first one. Every single year numberless new science fiction books are published, together with a wide variety of films and TV shows that could also be catalogued as science fictional. On the other hand, science fiction is no longer a marginal genre but one that is populated by authors such as Margaret Atwood, Douglas Coupland or Kurt Vonnegut. The aim of this paper is to examine the many problems that arise when translating science fiction texts.

Key words: Translation, Science Fiction, American Literature.

¿Resulta una distopía traducir la ciencia ficción?

Resumen: A pesar de lo ambiguo que resulta el término, la ciencia ficción es sin duda una de los géneros más populares de la segunda mitad del siglo XX y comienzos del XXI. Cada año se publican infinidad de novelas que podrían englobarse dentro de esta categoría, así como numerosas películas y series televisivas que hacen lo propio. Por otra parte, aunque siguen existiendo determinadas reticencias, la ciencia ficción no es ya un género minoritario y marginal, sino que autores del prestigio de Margaret Atwood, Douglas Coupland o Kurt Vonnegut producen, o han producido, obras que corresponden de una u otra manera al mismo. El objetivo de la presente comunicación es examinar las dificultades traductológicas que presentan los términos científicos contenidos en estas obras.

Key words: Traducción, Ciencia ficción, Narrativa norteamericana.

Sumario: 1. What do we translate when we translate science fiction? 2. The problems concerning the translation of science fiction texts. 2.1. Economic viases. 2.2. New universes imply new languages. 2.3. Technological language. (Tentative) Conclusions.

1. What do we translate when we translate science fiction?

As Willis E. McNelly points out, 'science fiction has as many definitions as literature itself' (1977: 89). Thus, the first difficult task the translator of a science fiction text has to tackle before initiating the translation process is to answer the always complex question, 'what does the science fiction tag exactly stand for?'

There are several reasons why defining science fiction in a precise manner becomes a titanic task. In the first place, I have to mention the deconstruction of traditional genres revolutions and the tendency towards eclecticism and hybridity that occurs during the postmodern intellectual revolutions of the first half of the twentieth century. In that particular skeptic scenario, traditional generic certainties became under suspicion, when not directly invalidated.

A second reason why there is not a clear univocal definition of the term is related to the traditional conception of science fiction as a minor & marginal literary genre that was highly enjoyed by young 'uncultivated' readers but not appreciated by academic audiences.

Thus, I am perfectly aware of the tentative and provisional nature of my present efforts to characterize science fiction. Nevertheless, I am also convinced of the necessity of throwing certain light on this question, even if that light is to be blurry by definition.

The first paradox that appears when trying to give science fiction a definition is the following one: science fiction might probably be one of the better known and most frequently employed tags from several different contexts that reach from publishing houses and film companies to critics and non-professional audiences. In this point it becomes pertinent to quote Adam Roberts, who explains that apparent paradox in the following terms, 'the term 'science fiction' resists easy definition. This is curious, because most people have a sense of what science fiction is. Any bookstore will have a section devoted to SF' (2006: 1).

Nevertheless, and besides the ubiquity of the term, it corresponds to a relatively new literary phenomenon. In his outstanding introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2003), James Gunn explains that the category was actually coined in the year 1929 by editor Hugo Gernsback (xvi), who did not only invent the nomenclature but also planted the first seminal seeds of what is nowadays understood as science fiction.

Gunn's affirmation is generally accepted by the majority of experts, but it is important to point out that it is only modern science fiction what

Gunn invented. The reason why experts such as Brian Stableford insist so much on this pertinent nuance is that according to them literary works such as Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis* (1619) & Tommaso Campanella's *La Città del Sole* (written in 1602 and published in 1623) are the true ancient relatives of the genre. Thus, if we are to trace science fiction origins our trip must go as far as the seventeenth century. So, Gunn invented modern science fiction but the sources from where he got inspiration are certainly much older and link the genre with Renaissance utopias and speculative fictions.

Anyhow, even Stableford insists on the importance of utopian and speculative fiction as early examples of science fiction, this same scholar agrees that modern science fiction is a contemporary invention, since according to this same scholar the genre gains importance during the second half of the twentieth century due to socio-political reasons, because it celebrates the liberating power of technological invention+ (1990: 41) and its main virtues [ō] were its imaginative ambition and enthusiasm, its prolific inventiveness and melodramatic grandiosity, its hunger for ingenious novelties, and its corollary fecundity of images and ideas+ (1990: 46). Thus, the genre fitted perfectly the *zeitgeist* of the European and American cultures from the interwars period.

Patrick Parrinder explains that as well as the political climate of instability and the constant threat that was haunting Europe at the time (that was, to a lesser extent, shared by the USA, that was suffering the aftereffects of the terrible Great Depression), also the contemporary fascination caused by the numberless new inventions, techniques and machines contributed to create extraordinary expectations but also a certain cognitive estrangement+ (2001: 5-6). As it looks obvious, science fiction was the best possible vehicle to deal with this proliferation of gadgets and cognitive estrangement.

Bruce Franklin summarizes this situation in the following quotation,

It was the spring of 1939, and the World of Tomorrow was about to go on exhibit. The conflagration later to be known as World War II had in fact already ignited in parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe— America itself was still wallowing in the depths of the international Depression, with over nine and a half million people unemployed. But it was also bounding ahead technologically. Radio broadcasting had now been around for almost two decades. One could fly coast-to-coast on a commercial DC-3 in just twenty-four hours. The future seemed both thrilling and chilling (1983: 107).

In her seminal paper, "From Trauma to Paranoia: Nuclear Weapons, Science Fiction and History" (1999), Cindy Hendershot concludes that the genesis of modern science fiction runs parallel to the development of military-oriented nuclear experimentation.

Thus, George E. Slusser, Colin Greenland & Eric S. Rabkin consider that science fiction seems to be looking at the future, but its main frame of analysis is the present moment, even if tainted by a veil of pessimism that makes the possibility of a future highly difficult, when not openly apocalyptic (1986: ix-xii). Quoting Slusser's own words:

We might think of science fiction as a literature in love with the future. For it is alone in possessing this dimension, alone in seeking to imagine, as things to come, realms that, in a maximum way, seem to respond to our sense of wonder. And yet, if we heed some of SF's most famous texts, and increasing numbers of its commentators, the very opposite is true. Seen in this light, SF's future imaginations are dominated instead by terror. And this terror is tautology, closure: for if SF lets us see the future, it is to enable us to experience dread, thus to be warned away from an activity which, if pursued, leads us inexorably from bad to worse (1986: 3).

Joseph Nesvadba explains that science fiction was also popular in the Communist countries, mostly because it was fashionable and it was understood also as a political protest (2000: 34).

Other experts, such as Brian Attebery, agree that science fiction was fundamental in the inter-wars period and during the posterior Cold War, but they called our attention upon other socio-political aspects played by the genre, since it began to be recognized in the 1960s and 1970s as a powerful tool for examining gender issues (2000: 131).

As it results evident, even if we have to go back in time till the sixteenth century in search of the first texts that could be considered as proto-science fiction, the vast majority of experts don't hesitate to affirm that the modern version of the genre is not only representative of the modern period but also an heir from it.

If tracing the origins of the genre and the editor who named it are relatively simple tasks, trying to identify and define its main features will be much more difficult ventures. The first stop in our journey will necessarily be at the

Columbia Encyclopedia, which succinctly asserts that, "sf is a) literary genre in which a background of science or pseudoscience is an integral part of the story" (2000: 42692). Isaac Asimov also defines science fiction as

that branch of literature which is concerned with the impact of scientific advances upon human beings+ (1977: 29). It is true that this definition does not point towards any inherently wrong direction, but from my point of view it is so general that it cannot be described as simplistic since it does never offer any aspect that could help us to delimitate the frontiers between this genre and many other contemporary ones. In this sense, as the science fiction writer and scholar Robert A. Heinlein affirms, %to define is to limit; a definition cannot be useful unless it limits+(1977: 4).

But neither the Columbia or Asimov's definitions allow us to limit our genre even in a slight manner. Thus, if we followed these definitions on a literal manner, we would be able to accept that some literary works that have never been labeled as examples of science fiction should be included within this category. For instance, Thomas Pynchon's or Douglas Coupland's whole corpuses seem to fit into the ambiguous definition offered by the Columbia or by Asimov.

This problem becomes ubiquitous when trying to draw the boundaries of science fiction, since the majority of definitions offer some accurate elements, but at the same time refuse to establish any clear elements that are exclusive from the science fictional universe. As a result, there are some authors and experts that have decided to accept that %never did know just what 'science fiction' meant: in all the nights I stayed awake till dawn debating definitions, I do not recall one that stood up unflinchingly to the light of day+ (Merrill, 1971: 53). Andy Sawyer keeps walking this path, at the same time that formulates an extremely enlightening metaphor, %a library of science fiction is a library of Babel: a collection of fictions classified as 'science fiction' because someone, somewhere, has decided that they reflect, somehow, one of the many definitions of sf+(2000: 5).

Nevertheless, there are many critical voices that have refused to throw the towel.

Judith Merrill, who started by affirming her own inability to define science fiction once, decided to refer to %speculative fiction, stories whose objective is to explore, to discover, to learn, by means of projection, extrapolation, analogue, hypothesis-and-paper-experimentation, something about the nature of the universe, of man, of 'reality'+(1971: 60).

Nickianne Moody embraces another perspective, since she affirms that science fiction is not an artistic or literary label, but a merely commercial one, %science fiction is whatever is sold as science fiction+(2000: 179).

Robert A. Heinlein gives us a more concrete delineation in the following quotation,

A handy short definition of almost all science fiction might read: realistic speculation about possible future events, based solidly on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present, and on a thorough understanding of the nature and significance of the scientific method (1977: 9).

Robert L. Forward considers that the key element in any science fiction story is not but its extreme freedom, %o you do pick this genre, then literally whole new worlds open up for you. No longer are your characters limited to one sex partner (zero, four, and unlimited are only a few choices). No longer are your skies limited to one sun, one moon, a few planets, and lots of stars+ (1986: 2). Nevertheless, Forward is careful to explain that this freedom is not going to take science fiction authors away from humanity's ancestral worries and existential dilemmas,

One can use science to create a world, an accurate, unusual world, which is completely correct as far as known science is concerned. The writer can then people that world with ordinary aliens, that have the same drives, the same fears, the same taboos, the same habits as the human creatures around us. But it really doesn't matter if you have done better than to just give them blue skin to set off their pointy ears above their purple-lipped mouths, for aliens that are humans in costume are trite (1986: 3).

Thomas D. Clareson agrees with Forward and affirms that ~~Ray~~ Bradbury felt that science fiction is the only form of literature in which philosophy, sociology, psychology, and history can be "played with" without ruining the work as literature; it creates "outsize images" of the problems that face societyq(1971: xi).

Another expert, Paul A. Carter, thinks that thanks to its preoccupation with timeless human concerns, science fiction is not facing the risk of obsolescence even if the advances of modern science may exceed the technical inventions its novels portray (1986).

C.N. Manlove studies the reject that science fiction has traditionally caused within academic contexts, and estimates that the academic world and %erious+ editors considered the genre as %he sub-literary product of cranks and escapists, and read and ardently defended only by cultists of the genre+(1986:1).

Norman Spinard considers that science fiction is not a popular genre within cultivated readers basically because of the perennial Manichaeism it shows,

The universe of sci-fi, unlike the universe in which we unfortunately find ourselves, is relentlessly moral; good always triumphs over evil, the

white hats always triumph over the black. Sci-fi's exploration of morality is generally confined, as so many book jacket blurbs proudly proclaim, to the "battle of good against evil"; the teams have their names clearly lettered on their uniforms, and the home team must always win (1990: 22).

C.S. Lewis develops Spina's concept as follows, of course, a given reader may be (some readers seem to be) interested in nothing else in the world except detailed studies of complex human personalities. If so, he has a good reason for not reading those kinds of work which neither demand nor admit it (1977: 124).

Gary Westfahl points towards a different cause underlying the bad relations between science fiction and academia, the genre's main target audience,

science fiction has been continually invigorated and inspired by its relationship with youthful readers--the audience that the genre has always enjoyed--and science fiction has more recently been strengthened and empowered by its relationship with the masses--the audience that the genre had to work harder to attract, or perhaps an audience that had to evolve in order to appreciate the genre (2000: 11).

As the next quotation proves, Leslie Fiedler agrees with Westfahl:

For a long time, however, such writing remained by and large pop criticism, as seemed appropriate enough for what was still a popular genre, ghettoized in pulp magazines and read almost exclusively by a minority audience, chiefly white adolescent males, convinced that they hated everything which their teachers considered literature (2000: 1).

Samuel R. Delany also refers to a certain ghetto quality (1987: 51), science fiction [] for many years bore a small, turnerous excrescence, sometimes called "fantasy" and sometimes sword and sorcery (1987: 66). In the last years, this situation seems to be changing, since as Damian Broderick explains,

Since fiction has gone from a set of practices employed in a commercial-cum-artistic ghetto to a major component of the entertainment industry [] it attracts all the benefits and blights associated with commercial megavisibility. It is not alone in this, but the mode has been badly mauled by the coincidence (1995: 65).

To finish my attempt at defining science fiction, I would like to quote Broderick again, since his opinion is the most comprehensive and precise one:

Sf is that species of storytelling native to a culture undergoing the epistemic changes implicated in the rise and supersession of technical-

industrial modes of production, distribution, consumption and disposal. It is marked by (i) metaphoric strategies and metonymic tactics, (ii) the foregrounding of icons and interpretative schemata from a collectively constituted generic *meta-text* and the concomitant de-emphasis of *fine writing* and characterization, and (iii) certain priorities more often found in scientific and postmodern texts than in literary models: specifically, attention to the object in preference to the subject (2000: 155).

As a result of the extreme ambiguity and lack of academic consensus that haunts science fiction, when a translator is given a science fiction book or short story to translate, he or she is never sure what he or she is translating. Thus he must start the translating process deprived of any certainty about the main features and reader's expectations inherent to this particular cultural manifestation.

2. The problems concerning the translation of science fiction texts

2.1. *Economic viases*

The first problem that has traditionally plagued many science fiction translations is linked to economic questions. Unfortunately, translation works have never received a very high payment and this situation becomes especially true when we are dealing with *lossy* books that are produced in a very fast manner and in a quite reduced number of copies.

In the previous section of this paper I affirmed that *serious* critics and readers did never take science fiction too seriously. As a result, publishing houses all over the world keep publishing many editions of science fiction texts, both in their native language and in translation. But, with some obvious exceptions (mainly authors that started their professional career within the boundaries of science fiction but moved on to more serious genres later), these editions did not pay much attention to the quality of these editions, not to speak of their translations.

Thus, it is not hard to understand that the best professionals would generally assume a translation that is produced under a lot of pressure but receives a not very significant gratification. And even in the cases where a competent translator accepts the task, he will have to complete his job in a time frame that could possibly be insufficient. This situation is common to the American and European publishing markets and, as a result, both English translation and translations of English texts into other western languages suffer the same problems.

In the Spanish context it is important to point out that many translations that were made prior to the 80s of the previous century took place in Latin America. In those cases, even the message was certainly

transmitted; Spanish readers quite often felt an added layer of estrangement that compromised the verisimilitude of the target text.

2.2. *New universes imply new languages*

Many science fiction texts opt to place the characters and actions in a far-away setting or in a post-apocalyptic scenario. Thus, ordinary language gets very frequently disrupted in a serious way. Or even completely replaced by a new jargon that immediately makes the task of translating those works doubly complex.

Since the list of science fiction novels that develop a new language that is based on English but departs from this language in a significant manner is extremely populated, in the present paper I have simply chosen some quintessential examples.

The first example I would like to make reference to corresponds to Anthony Burgess's 1962 dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange*. The novel, which is considered by academic critics as one of English most influential and sophisticated texts of the twentieth century, takes the reader to a futuristic but nevertheless close scenario in which technology is advanced but morals are primitive and certainly savage. In order to make this future environment even more awkward and threatening, Burgess follows Viktor Shklovski's principle of *ostranenie* (in the Russian original version of the term) or *defamiliarization* and transforms quotidian actions and expressions into something that is simultaneously new and different. In other words, by the use of a new and strange language, *A Clockwork Orange* becomes a seminal example of Freudian *Unheimliche* or uncanny.

The language invented by Burgess in the novel receives the name of *Nadsat* and is influenced by Russian. I will now pass on to offer some examples of this new language.

| Nadsat | English |
|------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Appypolly loggy</i> | Apology |
| <i>Bezoomy</i> | Mad |
| <i>Bugatty</i> | Rich |
| <i>Cancer</i> | Cigarette |
| <i>Creech</i> | Scream |
| <i>Eemya</i> | Name |
| <i>Guff</i> | Laugh |
| <i>Jammiwam</i> | Jam |
| <i>Lubbilubbing</i> | Making love |
| <i>Nadsat</i> | Teenage |

Orange

Man

The previous terms have been selected to prove how complex this new language is, since it originates from Russian words, onomatopoeias and invented out of the blue words in equal parts. Thus, following the novel without a glossary becomes quite complicated even in the source language. As it is evident, it is needless to say that taking this set of farfetched terms into another language can quite possibly be closer to a translator's nightmare than to a mere adventure.

The next example of a science fiction novel that develops a new artificial language corresponds to Kurt Vonnegut's 1963 novel *Cat's Cradle*. The scenario, is one more time, apocalyptic and dystopian in nature and the language introduced by Vonnegut in the novel is the one employed by a strange socio-religious sect that behaves like a sort of extended family that comforts the surviving humans in the nightmarish setting of the text. In this case, the new slang will be called Bokonon. The following examples have been taken from the novel:

Bokonon**English***Karass*

a group of people who, often unknowingly, are working together to do God's will. The people can be thought of as fingers in a Cat's Cradle.

Duprass

a karass of only two people, who almost always die within a week of each other. The typical example is a loving couple who work together for a great purpose.

Granfalloon

a false *karass*; i.e., a group of people who imagine they have a connection that does not really exist. An example is "Hoosiers"; Hoosiers are people from Indiana, and Hoosiers have no true spiritual destiny in common, so really share little more than a name.

Foma

harmless untruths.

Wrang-wrang

Someone who steers a Bokononist away from their line of perception. For example the narrator of the book is steered away from Nihilism when his Nihilist house sitter kills his cat and leaves his apartment in disrepair.

Kan-kan

An object or item that brings a person into their karass. The narrator states in the book that his *kan-kan* was the book he wrote about the Hiroshima bombing.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| <i>Sinookas</i> | The intertwining "tendrils" of people's lives. |
| <i>Vin-dit</i> | A sudden shove in the direction of Bokononism. |
| <i>Saroon</i> | To acquiesce to a <i>vin-dit</i> . |
| <i>Stuppa</i> | A fogbound child (i.e. an idiot). |
| <i>Duffle</i> | The destiny of thousands of people placed on one <i>stuppa</i> . |
| <i>Sin-wat</i> | A person who wants all of somebody's love for himself. |
| <i>Boko-maru</i> | The supreme act of worship of the Bokononists, which is an intimate act consisting of prolonged physical contact between the naked soles of the feet of two persons. |

The last example of how science fiction literature invents or adapts previous languages in order to create an alternate universe that is both common and unknown to the reader belongs to Russell Hoban's 1980 novel *Riddley Walker*. Unlike Burgess or Vonnegut, Hoban does not invent a new language from other western languages or sheer imagination but rather by revisiting Old and Middle English. Hoban's invented new language is consequent with the plot of the novel, in which a post-apocalyptic reduced group of survivors go back to a Middle Ages-like way of living. The following examples are representative of this language:

Every body knows Aunty. Stoan boans and iron tits and teef be twean her legs plus she has a iron willy for the ladys it gets red hot. When your time comes you have to do the juicy with her like it or not. She rides a girt big rat with red eyes it can see in the dark and it can smel whos ready for Aunty. Even if they dont know it ther selfs the rat can smel if theyre ready (1980: 90-91).

The worl is ful of things waiting to happen. Thats the meat and boan of it right there. You myt think you can jus go here and there doing nothing. Happening nothing. You cant tho you bleeding cant. You put your self on any road and some thing wil show its self to you. Wanting to happen. Waiting to happen. You myt say, 'I dont want to know.' But 1ce its showt its self to you you wil know wont you. You cant not know no mor. There it is and working in you. You myt try to put a farness be twean you and it only you cant becaws youre carrying it inside you. The waiting to happen aint out there where it ben no more its inside you (1980: 154).

I cud feal some thing growing in me it wer like a grean sea surging in me it wer saying, LOSE IT. Saying, LET GO. Saying, THE ONLYES POWER IS NO POWER (1980: 167).

As it becomes evident from the quotations above, in order to offer a translation of this novel, knowledge of old fashion varieties of English

together with a similar skill in the target language is necessary. Unlike other science fiction texts, *Riddley Walker* received an excellent translation into Spanish language by María Luisa Pascual and David Cruz, whose translation received the *Premio de Traducción de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-norteamericanos* in the year 2005. Below are some examples of how Pascual and Cruz transported Hoban's strange and exciting language into Spanish:

Sigo scriviendo aqui sobre el mismo día. El día en que mi padre murio. Pinchamos la caveça del perro en la staca i la colocamos sobre la casa de entrada. Sola Otrosvientos la qustodiava. Niños pequeños zarandavan devajo. Jugavan a la Manada Negra cançoneando (2011: 88).

Cargo el peso a mi destino a lo largo del camino. Eusa ya ha partido. Ste fue mi 1er espectáculo Eusa siendo yo nexo. Entreprestado por Avel Verbiclemente i Nesto Ofrentas los 2 Mandamases el Mistro Scotilla i el Mistro Governador la noche que mempusieron la cicatriz (2011: 131).

Eran demasiados i no teniamos nada que hazer vi a mi padre caer con 1 flecha en el coraçon i otros cayendo yo cai tan bien i me deslize entre la yerba crecida. Quando acavaron de matar a los hombres los oi lleuando se a las mujeres. Scondido en el bosque oia todo aquello i olia el humo aun puedo oler lo se tratatva de humo de gente i de madera, Quando volvió la calma sali arrastrando me. No podía oir nada solo el restallar del fuego i los quervos llamando se unos a otros (2011: 224).

2.3. *Technological language*

The third problem translators find when they are preparing the translation of a science fiction novel or screenplay is quite obvious: scientific terminology. As I shown in the first section of this paper, there is not a clear consensus on the exact nature of the term science fiction, but there are no doubts that this particular type of literature uses science either as an excuse or as a fundamental part of the narrative structure. Even in many occasions the scientific terminology employed in science fiction narratives is invented, at least some rudimentary scientific knowledge becomes indispensable in order to follow the unfolding of the different stories, plots and subplots. Thus, the translator must not only be able to translate literary texts in a competent manner but he must also be capable of managing some scientific terms and concepts in both the source and target languages.

Virtually any science fiction novel we might select (no matter how random this selection could be) would offer us several examples of scientific terminology, including real scientific terms together with fictional or newly coined pseudo-technological words and syntactic structures. In the present

paper I would offer several examples from Douglas Coupland, a Canadian post-modern novelist that cannot be considered as a %hardcore+ science fictionist but, nevertheless, plays very often with scientific concepts throughout his literary corpus.

In his opus primum, *Generation X, Tales from an Accelerated Culture* (1991), Coupland coins the following neologisms that are scientifically based: %Ethnomagnetism+ (1991: 32), %Accinated Time Travel+ (1991: 13), %Clique Maintenance+ (1991: 26), %Recurving+ (1991: 29), %Safety Net-ism+ (1991: 39), %Celebrity Schadenfreude+ (1991: 78), %01-ism+ (1991: 97), %2+2=5-ism+ (1991: 161), %Metaphasia+ (1991: 190), o %Cryptotechnophobia+ (1991: 200). Later on, in *jPod* (2007), the following passage is completely written in computer's language:

```
//called each frame and updates camera position based on position of
its target and the current camera cut void
GmMsCameraFollow::vUpdate(TReal rTimeDiff)
//          vUpdate2(rTimeDiff);
//          return;

GmMsPosKeyFrame *poCurrentDesiredKeyFrame;
(õ )
if(ReallsApproxZero(o Temp.m_rZ))
//If the player's Z position hasn't changed,
//then slide the box up
[o Temp.m_rZ = rTimeDiff*400.0f;]
else
//If the player's Z position is changing, leave (2007: 444).
```

In his last published work, *Generation A* (2009) Coupland employs cryptography, as in the example below:

```
S/-/ip 70 T0ky0 fi135 L8r 70d4y. /V0, 7/-/3y d0/-/q /-/4v3
4 m4(-/-/i/-/3 5/-/4p3d 1ik3 4 fu(ki/-/g ki773/-/ 7/-/47 m4k35
5u5/-/i (2009: 292).
```

Together with some chemistry terms, as the ones contained in the quotation,

```
PRODUCT INFORMATION
SOLON CR©
(Dihydrate Spliceosomic Protein snRNP-171)
Sustained-Release
Chronosuppresant Tablets
```

DESCRIPTION: SOLON is a protein with chronosuppressive features. It is a synthetic splicing protein, a complex of specialized RNA and protein subunits that removes introns from a transcribed pre-mRNA (hnRNA) segment (2009: 112).

(Tentative) Conclusions

Translating any contemporary piece of literature is never an easy task, but translating texts from a genre that defies classification and has generally been considered as marginal becomes an even more complex and demanding assignment. In this paper I have tried to summarize all the difficulties translators find when they are asked to carry a science fiction novel, short story or screenplay from any Western source language to another target one. The difficulties and complexities inherent to the process become more apparent in the Spanish context, where science fiction does not have a very prominent trajectory. On the other hand, the effects of a cruel and mostly illiterate dictatorship that not only hated but also distrusted any artistic manifestation that relied on freedom of speech and imagination are still, no matter how sad this might be, present in some cultural and academic circles. Thus, from my humble point of view, reflecting on science fiction as a prolific genre in general and its translation in a more particular layer becomes a necessary and urgent task.

Works cited

- (2004): *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- ABADI-NAGY, Z. (1996): "Serenity, Courage, Wisdom: A Talk with Kurt Vonnegut". *The Vonnegut Chronicles: Interviews and Essays*. Ed. Peter J. Reed, Leeds, Marc. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 15-34.
- ALLEN, W. R. (1991): *Understanding Kurt Vonnegut*. Columbia: University of South Carolina.
- ATTEBERY, B. (2000): "Science Fiction and the Gender of Knowledge." *Speaking Science Fiction: Dialogues and Interpretations*. Ed. Andy & Seed Sawyer, David (ed). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 131-44.
- BRODERICK, D. (1995): *Reading by Starlight: Postmodern Science Fiction*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. (2000): *Transrealistic Fiction: Writing in the Slipstream of Science Fiction*. Westprt: Greenwood University Press.
- BURGESS, A. (1962): *A Clockwork Orange*. London: William Heinemann.

- CARTER, P. A. (1986): "You Can Write Science Fiction If You Want To". *Hard Science Fiction*. Ed. Eric S. Rabkin, Slusser, George E. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 141-152.
- CLARESON, T. D. (1971): *Sf: The Other Side of Realism: Essays on Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press.
- COUPLAND, D. (1991): *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- _____ (2009): *Generation A*. New York: Scribner.
- _____ (2007): *Jpod : A Novel*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- DELANY, S. R. (1987): "The Gestation of Genres: Literature, Fiction, Romance, Science Fiction, Fantasy". *Intersections: Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Ed. Eric S. Rabkin, George E. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 63-74.
- FIEDLER, L. (2000): "The Criticism of Science Fiction". *Coordinates: Placing Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Ed. Eric S. Rabkin, Scholes, George E. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1-14.
- FORWARD, R. L. (1986): "When Science Writes the Fiction". *Hard Science Fiction*. Ed. George E. & Rabkin Slusser, Eric S. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1-8.
- FRANKLIN, B. H. "America as Science Fiction: 1939". *Coordinates: Placing Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Ed. Eric S. Rabkin, Scholes, Robert, Slusser, George E. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 107-24.
- GUNN, J. (2003): "Foreword". *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Ed. Edward & Mendelsohn James, Farah (ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, xv-xix.
- HENDERSHOT, C. (1999): "From Trauma to Paranoia: Nuclear Weapons, Science Fiction and History". *Mosaic*, 32.
- HOBAN, R. (1980): *Riddley Walker*. New York: Jonathan Cape.
- _____ (2011): *Dudo Errante*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- MANLOVE, C.N. (1986): *Science Fiction: Ten Explorations*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- MCNELLY, W. E. (1977): "Kurt Vonnegut as Science Fiction Writer". *Vonnegut in America: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Kurt Vonnegut*. Ed. Jerome Klinkowitz, Lawler, Donald L. New York: Dell Pub, 87-97.
- MERRIL, J. (1971): "What Do You Mean: Science Fiction?" *Sf: The Other Side of Realism: Essays on Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Ed. Thomas D. Claerson. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 53-96.

- MOODY, N. (2000): "Aphasia and Mother Tongue: Themes of Language Creation and Silence in Women's Science Fiction". *Speaking Science Fiction: Dialogues and Interpretations*. Ed. Andy & Seed Sawyer, David (ed). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 179-88.
- NESVADBA, J. (2000): "Speaking Science Fiction-out of Anxiety?". *Speaking Science Fiction: Dialogues and Interpretations*. Ed. Andy & Seed Sawyer, David (ed). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 32-40.
- PARRINDER, P. (2001): *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- ROBERTS, A. (2006): *Science Fiction*. London: Routledge.
- SAWYER, A. (2000): "Who Speaks Science Fiction?". *Speaking Science Fiction: Dialogues and Interpretations*. Ed. Andy & Seed Sawyer, David (ed). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 5-11.
- SLUSSER, G. E. (1986): "The Ideals Worlds of Science Fiction." *Hard Science Fiction*. Ed. Eric S. Rabkin, Scholes, George E. (ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, vii-xvi.
- SPINARD, N. (1990): *Science Fiction in the Real World*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- STABLEFORD, B. (1990): "The British and American Traditions of Speculative Fiction". *Contours of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Eight International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. Ed. Michele K. (ed) Langford. New York: Greenwood Press, 39-49.
- VONNEGUT, K. (1963): *Cat's Cradle*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- WESTFAHL, G. (2000): *Science Fiction, Children's Literature, and Popular Culture: Coming of Age in Fantasyland*. Westport: Greenwood Press.