TRANSLANGUAGING IN ASEMIC WRITING:
A METRIC SPACE APPROACH

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We are now in an age where we are spending more time than ever before pointing up the intrinsic complexities of translations but we have less and less time to make that complexity a textual reality.[a]

[a] Cronin, M., *Translation as globalization*, London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 121.

- text / [not only a matter of] content / forms $\longleftrightarrow$ relations

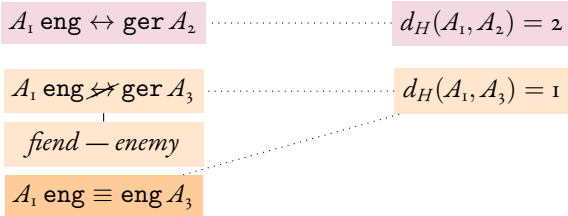- signification activated by objects devoid of meaning in themselves

- metric space:

  > set of elements [points] and a notion of distance [metric function] between them

- Hamming: $d_H(x, y)$ number of positions at which corresponding symbols in strings x and y of the same length do not match / minimum number of errors while copying / transcoding example: $d_H(1\underline{0}101, 1\underline{1}101) = 1$

- x, y binary to decimal $\longrightarrow 29 - 21 = 8$

▶ A, B: matrices of alphabetic signs

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} f & r & i & e & n & d \\ f & r & e & u & n & d \\ f & & i & e & n & d \end{bmatrix} \qquad B = \begin{bmatrix} r & f & i & e & d & n \\ f & r & e & u & d & n \\ f & & i & & r & d \end{bmatrix}$$

▶ metric schemes:

A_1 eng $\leftrightarrow$ ger A_2 ⋯⋯⋯⋯ $d_H(A_1, A_2) = 2$

A_1 eng $\not\leftrightarrow$ ger A_3 ⋯⋯⋯⋯ $d_H(A_1, A_3) = 1$

fiend — enemy

A_1 eng $\equiv$ eng A_3

▶ B lacks the basic connective structure of a language

▶ topological space: notion of closeness / properties involving union and intersection of sets

▶ $\{f, i, e, n, d\} \subset \{f, r, i, e, n, d\}$: *in a friend, a foe hides.*

▶ lines: existence / possibility of relational
   structure between meaningless signs [dots]

▶ text consistence: connections between dots

▶ connections: rules determined by genre of
   writing / language

▶ grid: implicit layer to which the 'reader'
   refers / not univocal / influenced by
   language intersection / social environment

▶ relational grid $\longleftrightarrow$ relational dialectic /
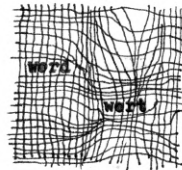   mutable context $\longrightarrow$ not a set of postulates
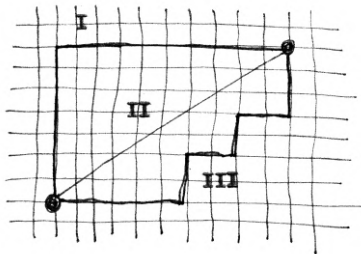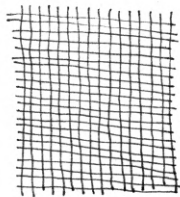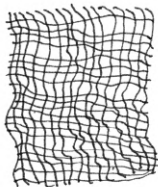
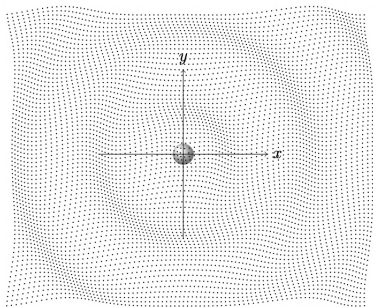|		
language	translanguaging	code-switching
[1]	[2]	[3]

- ▶ [1] roughly regular grid / single language layer
- ▶ [2] straight lines replaced by curved ones / mixed-line grid pattern ⟶ originally multi-language metric
- ▶ [3] local deformation of existing metric / [reversible] deformation of the dynamic grid of underlying idiolect
- ▶ code-switching deformation belongs to text / translanguaging grid to individual idiolect

masses ∼ energy ···················· signs

gravitational field ···················· metric

field equation ···················· language

curvature ···················· signification

spacetime ···················· text

Masses and energy generate a gravitational field that warps the fabric of spacetime around them. Einstein's field equations relate the distribution of matter and energy to the induced curvature. The more massive an object is, the greater its gravitational influence, and consequently, the more pronounced the curvature of spacetime around it. This affects the motion of objects, causing them to follow curved paths.
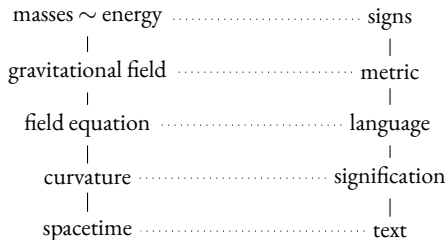
Signs generate a metric that warps the fabric of text around them. Language relates the distribution of signs to the induced signification. The more signifying a sign is, the greater its metric influence, and consequently, the more pronounced the signification of the text around it. This affects the motion of signs, causing them to follow curved paths.

- ▶ code-switching emphasizes the analysis of forms aside from social roots
- ▶ at the signifier levels much like measurement tools [signifier machines]
- ▶ multiple-language page $\longrightarrow$ noisy interpretation process [simultaneous translation / other associations]
- ▶ single-language perspective more or less unconsciously adopted
- ▶ gaps between languages / intrinsic dualism modify the signification process
- ▶ *simulated annealing*: noise reshuffles connections [language conventions] $\longrightarrow$ system [text] surpasses the minimum $\longrightarrow$ further configurations [of signification] explored

- ▶ text through a single-language lens:
- ▶ unknown languages $\longrightarrow$ optical aberrations
- ▶ not translated / untranslatable $\longrightarrow$ <u>not</u> a missing piece behind pixelated areas
- ▶ out-of-focus parts: insisted-upon / never accomplished sense of completeness
- ▶ exclusion principle / piecewise-defined metric space
- ▶ bottom of the page: prose-like space dynamically / organically linked to the page
- ▶ contrapuntal experience / spectral analysis of noise when multiple languages intertwine

EIS (LN 2022), based on the recordings I made in 2010 of an Icelandic glacier shrinking and shifting, using a set of contact microphones.

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intro

metric / topological space

semiotic environment

language-induced
manifolds

code-switching

translanguaging

asemic writing

conclusions

▶ languages interfere from the outset

▶ <u>not</u> a translation from the original / <u>not</u> the final balance after the moment of writing

▶ trajectories oriented by attractors of meaning beyond individual languages

▶ author's linguistic heritage $\longrightarrow$ a single linguistic structure

▶ fusion of multiple languages (L_1, L_2, L_3) $\longrightarrow$ additional levels of detail

▶ energy level structure molecule (<u>multiple</u> atoms) *vs* <u>single</u> atom

$$E_e | L_1 \qquad E_v | L_2 \qquad E_r | L_3$$
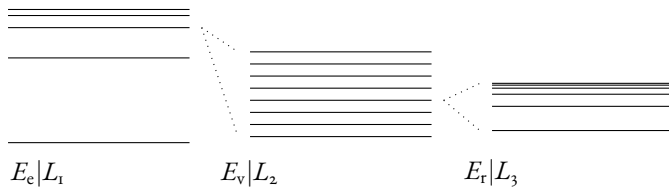
▶ broader multilayerdeness of excitation schemes

▶ atoms $\longrightarrow$ closed systems / molecules $\longrightarrow$ open systems

- common perception $\longrightarrow$ three distinct categories: past, present, future
- simultaneity / contemporaneity: equivalent in essence / different in forms across languages
- Einstein's relativity: time is part of the geometry of the universe

geometry not merely a mathematical structure / not established purely on mathematical assertions

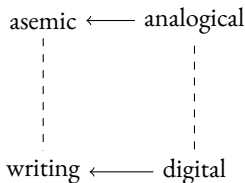languages not truly linguistic entities / their demarcations established on non-linguistic bases

- multilingual individuals $\longrightarrow$ linguistic entity shaped by the fusion of multiple languages
- additional levels of detail of signification available

- potential form of translanguaging: codified languages / archetypal system of signs
- pre-linguistic condition of imitative drawing *vs* encoded readable handwriting
- readable handwriting: a form of conditioning for an unconscious heritage of signs
- unstoppable multiplier of noisy variants / sabotage of an initial message
- meaning germination involves conscious / unconscious processes
- outcome $\longleftrightarrow$ 'reader' / quantum measurements $\longleftrightarrow$ experimental set up
- multiple readership $\longleftrightarrow$ multiple authorship

> Does it make sense to think of a content actually accessed in or through the text, or should we envisage that signification is released from a range of possibilities while the text is accessed? If the latter is correct, *what* gets transformed into a content?

- natural phenomena $\longrightarrow$ energy exchanges
- accessing a text $\longrightarrow$ increase / release of signified
- process of measuring $\longleftrightarrow$ process of signification

- ▶ asemic patterns ⟶ no longer quantizable compounds of elementary units
- ▶ no fixed set of symbols ⟶ what metric space?
- ▶ analogical way *vs* alphabetic / digital system?

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{asemic} & \longleftarrow & \text{analogical} \\ \vdots & & \vdots \\ \text{writing} & \longleftarrow & \text{digital} \end{array}$$

- ▶ mathematical metric space ⟷ asemic page / set of signifiers whose signified is irrelevant in order to establish a relationship between them
- ▶ the whole text as a net of potentially interconnected nodes
- ▶ each reader employs a 'metric' / perception of 'nearness'
- ▶ arbitrary boundary between signs
- ▶ essence | ex-sense[1]

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[1] *ex-* is a prefix that stands for *out*, *out of*, *from*.

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► languages ⟷ [approximately] interchangeable relational schemes of modes and forms

► principles / symmetries / intrinsic properties lie behind [beyond] the description adopted

Universe ⟶ non-Euclidean, except for small portions in a first approximation / spacetime ⟶ single entity

languages ⟶ local variants of deeper structures / translanguaging ⟶ a unified process

► perception of the world ⟶ collection of data reorganized into signs

► competing structures ⟶ further synthesis