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## **Paul Verhaeghen's own Voice in Omega Minor: a Comparative Study of Source Text, Trial Translation and Self-Translation**

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*Omega Minor*, an award-winning novel describing a hybrid culture since World War II, was written by Flemish-American writer Paul Verhaeghen in 2004 and also translated by him in 2007. In his self-translation, which won the 2008 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, he wanted to reflect 'his own voice', which he had been looking for in the trial translation provided by the Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren (Flemish Fund for Literature) in vain. But what exactly is Verhaeghen's own voice? Does it express his original ideas or is it just a matter of formulation?

The answer to this question has been sought in a comparative semantic, pragmatic and stylistic textual analysis of the source text, a trial translation and the published self-translation of the chapter 'Hey-hey we're the Nazis!'. A corpus of differences between the trial translation and the self-translation and a comparison of those passages with the corresponding source text passages has revealed to what extent Paul Verhaeghen's 'own voice' is heard in this description of a cultural and physical battle between skinheads and Turkish immigrants in Berlin.

*Keywords: self-translation, trial translation, source text, writer's voice, translator's voice, semantic / pragmatic/ stylistic differences*

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### **Self-translations**

Self-translations may appear in different shapes: they may appear in the same book together with their source text, in which both the source text and the translation are printed side by side (e.g. 16<sup>th</sup> century Dutch writer van der Noot's *Olympia*, Baker 1998/2001, 257) or integrated into one text (cf. Granqvist's notion of 'bilingual translation', 2006, 93-5). They may also appear as transliterations: those are single texts that hold the source text and the translation in just one language, the target

language, which bears, however, features of source text discourses which the translator aims at carrying across (e.g. Nigerian writer Achebe, Granqvist 2006). Paul Verhaeghen's self-translation, however, is an example of yet another type of self-translation, i.e. the one in which the source and the target texts appear in two separate books. In 2004, this Flemish-American writer published *Omega Minor* (2004) in Dutch. It is an epic novel that describes a hybrid culture since World War II. It was nominated for the Dutch-speaking Gouden

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Uil prize (2004) and won the Flemish Triannual Culture Prize (2005), the F. Bordewijk Prize (2005) and the Prize for Literature of the Flemish Provinces (2006). Three years after the publication of the source text, the English self-translation appeared.

But why, the question arises, did Verhaeghen translate this novel of more than 600 pages long himself? Clearly, Verhaeghen's situation is very different from to the South-African tradition of self-translators, which started in the 1930s by Afrikaans playwright, poet and author Uys Krige, and flourished in the late 1970s and 1980s with André Brink. Those self-translators 'wrote back' (Ashcroft, et al. 1989): they aimed at resisting a dominant ideology like apartheid and used English after having used Afrikaans originally (Kruger 2008). Their purpose was to describe "the escalating conflict Apartheid was generating in South Africa. By presenting their work in English, Afrikaans authors tried to escape censorship although sometimes both works in both languages got banned. To an extent it can be regarded as a desperate attempt to ensure personal literary survival" (Kruger 2008, 6). Such self-translators draw attention to their source topic or culture, but Verhaeghen's *Omega Minor* describes a culture that is different from the language in which he writes: most scenes in the novel take place in Germany and the USA and all are narrated in the Dutch language. Nor is *Omega Minor* the type of self-translation that was produced by a writer who thought that nobody else would be able to translate his work because it deals with a myriad of historical cultural elements, as Ribeiro did with *An Invincible Memory*, which covers a period Brazilian history of 400 years (Diva Cardoso de Camargo 2009). Nor did Paul Verhaeghen want to distance himself from his own work by means of umschreiben (rewriting) as Flusser did (Guldin 2009).

What happened in the case of Verhaeghen was that the Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren (Flemish Fund for Literature) commissioned a translator to translate two excerpts from *Omega Minor* into English as a trial translation. After reading the trial translation, Verhaeghen decided, as he reported in a press interview (Van den Broeck 2004), that his knowledge of the American language was adequate enough to translate the novel himself and to render a translation that reflected 'his own voice', which was something that he had been looking for in the trial translation in vain. While the self-translation project was initiated by the extraneous market-related motive of reaching a global audience with an international language like English for a novel in a 'minority' language like Dutch, it was, therefore, also immediately driven by intrinsic motives such as seeking a sense of completion in the same way that Vladimir Nabokov did when he translated, for example, his English *Lolita* into Russian (Anderson 2000, 1251) and / or expressing the voices within himself, which was an important factor for Raymond Federman to translate his work from French into English and vice versa (Santoyo 2005: 858). Perhaps he also wanted to return to his own literary scene with his self-translation as Blixen did with her free Danish renderings, as Isaac Dinesen, of *Out of Africa*, the novel that she had originally written in English.

### ***Omega Minor's* two translation situations**

In order to find out how Verhaeghen's voice differs from that of the trial translator, I will first briefly characterize the two different translation situations in terms of their actors and their 'cognitive environments'. This term is derived from Sperber and Wilson and denotes all assumptions that are readily available to a person in a given situation. In a translation

Table 1. Trial and self translation situations

	Source text	Trial translation	Self-translation
<b>Commissioner</b>	(Meulenhoff/ Manteau, Antwerp 2004)	Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren	Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren (Dalkey Archive)
<b>Writer/ Translator</b>	Paul Verhaeghen	Rosalind Buck British English native speaker	Paul Verhaeghen American English second language
<b>Audience</b>	Dutch-speaking	English-speaking	English-speaking

situation, at least six cognitive environments are relevant: the source text commissioner's, the source text writer's, the source text audience's, the target text commissioner's, the target text audience's and the target text writer's, i.e. the translator's. Table 1 briefly identifies the two different translation situations:

Obviously, the trial translator's translation situation and the self-translator's translation situation share the same source text-related actors and their cognitive environments. They even share the same envisaged audience, the English-speaking world, and they share same translation commissioner, i.e. the Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren, although some influence from Dalkey Archive as the publisher should also be allowed for in the case of the self-translation. Consequently, it is mainly the translators themselves that are different, and especially particular about this difference is the fact that only one of them – the self-translator – is identical to the writer of the source text, another actor of the translation situation. In other words, while the trial translation is a classic example of the author<sub>A1</sub> / work<sub>L1</sub> → translator<sub>T1</sub> / work<sub>L2</sub> dialectic, the self-translation is a model example of the extreme case of the author<sub>A1</sub> / work<sub>L1</sub> → translator<sub>T2=A1</sub> / work<sub>L2</sub> dialectic with one person carrying out two tasks that are usually carried out by two separate people (Tanqueiro 2000, 63). It follows that any difference between the trial translation and the self-translation will

have to be associated with this difference in author/work → translator work dialectic.

The simplicity of Verhaeghen's translation situation contrasts sharply with the situations in which some of Beckett's work was self-translated. For some of his English versions, Beckett used several French versions, not only the final manuscript, and his *Company / Compagnie* was first written in English, then translated into French and then the English version was revised (cf. Fitch 1993). In Verhaeghen's case, however, there is just one version of the source text and one version of the self-translation, so far.

To some extent, Paul Verhaeghen's self-translation situation resembles that of another migrant to the USA, Singer, as is illustrated in the following quotation recorded by Simon:

“In his 1970 “Author's Note” to *A Friend of Kafka and Other Stories* [Singer] wrote: “I have translated these stories with the assistance of collaborators, and I find that I do much revision in the process of translation. It is not an exaggeration to say that over the years English has become my ‘second’ language.”” (Simon 2008, 75)

Indeed, Paul Verhaeghen, too, has become confident enough in his English language skills so as to translate a 600-page book. However,

Verhaeghen's self-translation situation is also different from Singer's: as opposed to Singer, who first wrote in a hasty Yiddish, Verhaeghen did not write *Omega Minor* in a hasty Dutch that needed revision. Instead, Verhaeghen had the book completely published in his native tongue and he had been awarded various prizes for it, before a translation was conceived.

### **A writer's / translator's voice**

What exactly is Verhaeghen's own voice, which differs so much from the voice in the trial translation that it was necessary for him to translate this voluminous work himself? Is his notion of 'voice' similar to what is usually conceived of as 'voice' in translation studies, i.e. do we find a particular translator voice/style or idiolect in this self-translation (e.g. Baker 2000, Hermans 1996, Munday 2008)?

Defining the concept of 'voice' is not an easy task, neither is it the aim of this contribution to fully explore it. However, this investigation does need an operational type of definition and it will, therefore, characterize voice analytically by distinguishing two different foci. Both foci are extracted from definitions given for 'voice' by the OED. On the one hand, 'voice' can either be a matter of "point of view in writing" or "literary tone" (OED): this is a particular position or perspective from which the characters and the story of events are described and narrated. On the other hand, though not completely detached from it, 'voice' can also be a question of "mode of expression" or a particular "style" (OED): this is the way in which a particular perspective is formulated, its sounds and other perhaps more formal qualities. It is these two basic aspects of voice that will be closely investigated in the quest for Verhaeghen's use or conceptualization of the term 'voice': does Verhaeghen engage in an undertaking that is a matter of formulation,

or does he also conceptualize his originality and express a translator's voice that is different from the writer's voice?

### **Research question**

In order to find the answer to the question, this article zooms in on one passage (2,656 words), for which there is also a trial translation, i.e. the excerpt from the fourth chapter 'Hey-hey we're the Nazis!' starting from the beginning until the character Liebenfells says to his disciple Hugo "You'll find out soon enough if you make any mistakes". In this passage, two characters meet each other, Hugo (leader of the skinheads) and Nebula (film student) in a physical and cultural battle between skinheads and Turkish immigrants in Berlin.

The research question was split up into two parts as follows:

1. Do the trial translation and the self-translation render conceptualizations that are different from one another (are meanings conveyed in both versions different) or do they convey the same story with different words or other linguistic forms (is the language in both versions different)?
2. Does either translation conceptualize and / or formulate the source text differently, i.e. does either 'betray' the original?

This means that the whole passage was subjected to both a meaning and a stylistic analysis. In the first stage of analysis, both texts from the trial translation and Verhaeghen's translation were compared with each other and any pair of sentences that revealed textual differences, whether they were functional (semantic or pragmatic meanings) or formal (style) differences, was collected in an aligned corpus of the two translations. Since the writers of both translations are different people, I expected there to be quite a number of differences at both levels. The second

stage of analysis involved the incorporation of all corresponding source text sentences into a larger – parallel – corpus and the annotation to what extent either of the two translations differed from the source text, again both semantically / pragmatically and stylistically. At this stage, expectations were that the trial translation, which was conceived by a person who is different from the source text writer, would betray the original more than the self-translation.

It is relatively straightforward and non-controversial to identify and name stylistic differences between two sentences in terms of register, formal/informal style, figures of style or other formal characteristics. In example 1, for instance, both the source text and the trial text have two parallel constructions in which two pairs of items are combined with each other separated by a comma: hairy blankets and cardboard boxes, Ø pinched shaving gear and stolen Walkmans and potatoes and leeks, Ø bread and tomatoes. In the self-translation, this parallelism has become less obvious because of the insertion of filled with and and (Table 2).

The semantic / pragmatic analysis, however, may need a word of explanation. In order to deliver a systematic and quantifiable account, meaning differences were categorized along four layers of meaning. Basically, the four layers can be paraphrased as follows (for an earlier and more

detailed version of the layers, see Vandepitte 2009):

1. the writer's assessment of a state of affairs: when two writers have different assessments, they see (hear, sense, ...) different things;
2. the writer's attitude to a state of affairs: when two writers have different attitudes they see (the same) things differently;
3. the writer's assessment of the communicative situation: when two writers have different assessments, they have different relations with their audiences and adopt different modes of speech with them;
4. the writers' own assumed identities: two writers usually assume different identities and may thus express different personal traits through their texts.

Those layers of meaning are assumed to be simultaneously present, which means that each sentence at the same time reflects the writer's assessment of a state of affairs, the writer's attitude to a state of affairs, the writer's assessment of the communicative situation and the writer's own assumed identity. Since the text under discussion is a literary work, reference will no longer be made to the writer's assessment, attitude or identity, but to that of the narrator.

Table 2

	Source text	Trial translation	Self-translation
1	in een wanorde van harige dekens en kartonnen dozen, Ø gejat scheergerei en gestolen walkmans, ze gaan de stad in en grissen in het voorbijgaan aardappelen en prei, Ø brood en tomaten van de fruitstalletjes in Wedding.	They move into the squat in a chaos of hairy blankets and cardboard boxes, Ø pinched shaving gear and stolen Walkmans; they go into town and swipe potatoes and leeks, Ø bread and tomatoes as they pass the fruit stalls in Wedding.	They move into the squat and drag in heaps of hairy blankets and stacks of cardboard boxes <b>filled with</b> shoplifted shaving supplies and stolen Walkmans. For food, they pilfer potatoes and leeks <b>and</b> bread and tomatoes off the fruit carts in the streets of Wedding.

The examples below illustrate how two narrators' assessments in the translations of one state of affairs (layer 1) are different from each other in terms of predication with different arguments or predicates (in search of versus filling in example 2), in terms of modification with different characteristics describing the arguments or predicates (noisy versus illicit example 3), or in terms of quantification with different quantities or different expressions of degrees (they're bored versus the much stronger they bore themselves to tears in example 4). The presentation of the state of affairs is different in example 5, where the agent of the rough fingers gets a stronger focus in the final rheme position of the utterance in the trial translation than in the self-translation. Embedding and coherence, too, are different, as is shown in example 6 (with one single element – and the last – in the afterthought in the trial translation and a more complex one – for the first time in his life, and also the last time – in the self-translation) and example 7 (with a temporal link – then – to introduce a new state of affairs in the trial translation and a contrastive

one – but – in the self-translation) respectively (Table 3).

Two or more utterances may also differ from each other with respect to the narrator's attitude to a state of affairs (layer 2). In example 8, the narrator's attitude of belief in the self-translation, which contains the modal maybe, has a lower degree of certainty than that of the narrator in the trial translation. Example 9 shows how the narrator's own expectation is expressed explicitly – quite unexpectedly – while the trial translation expresses one of the story's characters' expectations – to Hugo's not inconsiderable amazement. Besides attitudes of belief and expectations, narrators may also express their desire (or lack of desire) to a state of affairs or its elements, and while the trial translation remains fairly neutral in example 10, the narrator in the self-translation stresses his disgust in more than one way (undrinkable, tastes of nothing but salt, rancid, spotted, and a mushy black nightmare) (Table 4).

Narrators' assessments of their communicative situation (layer 3) are retrievable

Table 3

	Trial translation	Self-translation
2	the travellers with their shiny, worn-out plastic bags <b>in search of</b> affordable versions of the German Dream	their passengers are out in the streets, <b>filling</b> their plastic shopping bags with discount versions of the German dream
3	<b>noisy</b> skin-flick cinemas.	the <b>illicit</b> porno theaters
4	They're doing what everybody does, um die Gedächtniskirche rum: <b>they're bored</b> , so they're hanging around where everybody hangs around.	They're just doing what everybody else does around the Gedächtniskirche: They hang out, <b>they bore themselves to tears</b> , they stroll along the streets everybody else is strolling along, ...
5	Her hands are shaking, her body aching where <b>she has been gripped</b> by rough paws	Her hands are shaking, her body aches where <b>rough fingers have groped her</b>
6	In Nebula's arms, Hugo falls, <b>for the first time in his life – and the last</b> – desperately, desperately in love.	In Nebula's arms, Hugo is falling in love – <b>for the first time in his life, and also the last time</b> – and what a mighty fall it is.
7	<b>Then</b> they'd spotted the camera and got angry.	<b>But</b> the boys had seen her camera and they got angry.

Table 4

	Source text	Trial translation	Self-translation
8	Ø Ooit was dit een stadscentrum.	Ø Once, this was the city centre.	<b>Maybe</b> it's just that once this was the heart of town
9	Die bende lethargische vlegels, die kuieraars met de smalle heupen die anders nergens voor deugen dan voor mineure dieveggerij, Ø zij ontpoppen zich <b>tot Hugo's niet geringe verbazing</b> (back translation: to Hugo's not inconsiderable amazement) tot een geordende troep branieschoppers.	That band of lethargic louts, layabouts with narrow hips, who are good for nothing but petty thievery, Ø turns, <b>to Hugo's not inconsiderable amazement</b> , into a well-organised band of swashbucklers.	This bunch of lethargic fellows, these narrow-hipped loiterers brought up on minor thievery, they rise to the occasion and reveal themselves <b>quite unexpectedly</b> to be a tight gang of professional thugs.
10	betaalbare versies van de Duitse Droom – bananen en blikken zalm, spuitbussen met Schlagsahne, goedkope naaktbladen	affordable versions of the German Dream – bananas and tinned salmon, cans of whipped cream, cheap porno mags	discount versions of the German dream – six-packs of <b>undrinkable</b> lager, tins of salmon <b>that tastes of nothing but salt</b> , aerosol cans of <b>rancid</b> whipped cream, [...] and maybe a bunch of <b>spotted</b> bananas that will turn into <b>a mushy black nightmare</b> before the bus hits Warsaw

from stylistic matters and differences may show up related to the use of, for instance, free direct thought (not at all) and imagery (of a cat) as in examples 10 and 11 respectively. Similarly, the use of particular language varieties and registers – as in examples 13 (German um die ... rum) and 14 (informal mags and cheapo) – and particular information distribution patterns – as in example 15, where the marked sentence construction beginning with an adjective, And afraid she is, is missing in the trial translation – depend on audiences. Finally, the narrators' own assumed identities may differ and example 16 illustrates how the self-translation's narrator is the only one to betray the value attached to honesty in communication (honestly) (Table 5).

### Results

After analyzing each pair of translations in terms of all potential semantic / pragmatic and

stylistic differences, the overall quantitative findings (Table 6) show that although the trial translation and the source text have different numbers of sections (source text (ST) 6 and trial translation 3) and also different numbers of paragraphs (source text 44 and trial translation 45), their total numbers of sentences remain exactly the same.

And although not every single source text sentence was translated by one single sentence in the target text as in example 17, this finding points to the trial translator adopting the same units that Verhaeghen did in his source text. However, as a self-translator Verhaeghen (Table 7) did not remain so faithful to the units of his own text. Although the self-translation contains the same number of sections, there is a different number of paragraphs and a remarkable excess of 19 sentences, which constitutes 10% of the whole text. Clearly, Verhaeghen has added to his source text: he has made his story more vivid

Table 5

	Source3 text	Trial translation	Self-translation
11	Ze zijn niet op zoek naar stennis. Ze willen geen dreiging uitstralen, Hugo en zijn mannen.	They're not looking for any bother. They're not trying to look threatening, Hugo and his men.	Honestly, Hugo and his friends aren't looking for trouble. <b>Not at all.</b> Their intention is not to be a menace to the general public.
12	En dus wordt er eentje opgehaald, die dan enigszins amateuristisch in elkaar getimmerd wordt. Ø	So one on his own is hauled back and subsequently rather amateurishly done over. . Ø	So the skins pick one random target to go after. They beat him up in a surprisingly amateurish fashion, <b>in much the same way a cat – so elegant and precise when hunting – becomes rude and vulgar when playing with her prey.</b>
13	Ze doen wat iedereen daar doet, <b>um die</b> Gedächtniskirche <b>rum</b>	They're doing what everybody does, <b>um die</b> Gedächtniskirche <b>rum</b>	They're just doing what everybody else does <b>around the</b> Gedächtniskirche
14	bananen en blikken zalm, spuitbussen met Schlagsahne, <b>goedkope</b> naaktbladen (back translation: cheap porno magazines)	bananas and tinned salmon, cans of whipped cream, <b>cheap</b> porno <b>mags</b>	six-packs of undrinkable lager, tins of salmon that tastes of nothing but salt, aerosol cans of rancid whipped cream, <b>cheapo</b> shrink wrapped <b>magazines</b>
15	Ze blijft filmen, ondanks haar angst. En <b>angst</b> heeft ze.	She continues to film, despite her fear. Ø	Her hands are shaking, her body aches where rough fingers have groped her, but she does not run away; the light stays on; she keeps on filming, despite her fear. And <b>afraid</b> she is.
16	Ø. Ze zijn niet op zoek naar stennis. Ze willen geen dreiging uitstralen, Hugo en zijn mannen.	Ø. They're not looking for any bother. They're not trying to look threatening, Hugo and his men.	<b>Honestly</b> , Hugo and his friends aren't looking for trouble. Not at all. Their intention is not to be a menace to the general public.

Table 6. Structural units in the source text and its translations

	ST	Trial	Self
no. of sections	6	3	6
no. of paragraphs	44	45	42
no. of sentences	188	188	207

Table 7

	Source text	Trial translation
17	Zo kan het worden uitgelegd, zo kan de jonge cineast het verkopen.	You could describe it like that. That's how the young filmmaker could sell it.

or illustrative, and he has explained matters more explicitly, as, for instance, in the case of cultural references such as Zoo and Ku'damm, which became Zoo Station and Ku'damm shopping district respectively.

**Stage 1: trial translation versus self-translation**

A comparison of the trial translation with the self-translation yields a total of 6 short utterances that are completely equal (It takes less than two minutes. Nebula is a free spirit. She comes and goes. She is a cat. "What are we doing here?" Hugo's men ask their leader. He's dancing on a dwarf. "What if I make a mistake?"). In the remaining utterances, a total of 672 items have been noted with respect to which the two translations differed from each other. Since one item may yield differences at more than one of each of the four layers of meaning and at the stylistic level simultaneously, the total number of differences between the two translations is even much higher. In other words, there are many instances where Verhaeghen's voice is noticeably different from that of the trial translation. As was expected, the trial and the self-translation also differ from each other both formally and functionally, however, there is a remarkable difference between the number of formal and the number of semantic / pragmatic differences. In fact, differences were a matter of formulation 174 times, or somewhat more than one fifth of all differences, and they were a matter of meaning 656 times. Most of those were a matter of seeing

different things, i.e. 536 times or two thirds of all differences, and 206 times they represented a case of seeing things differently (or almost one quarter of all differences). With respect to differences that could be clearly related to the narrator assessing the communicative situation differently, 188 cases were found. Example 18 shows that the trial translator envisages a different audience than the self-translator does: the trial translation has the informal expression (a packet) and a pronoun (it), while the self-translator uses a more explicit phrase (very good money) and renames the object (the tape). In example 19, the self-translator uses free direct speech and the reader hears, as it were, what it is the young men are saying to each other; in the trial translation, no speech is involved but we hear a narrator expressing potential actions that everyone could undertake (Table 8).

Only very few examples were found where the narrators' own assumed identity showed a difference as in example 16.

The results therefore indicate that the narrator in the self-translation saw states of affairs that are different from those that the narrator in the trial translation saw (layer 1). To be more precise, Verhaeghen's self-translation has predicates or arguments that are different from those in the trial translation 245 times. This list is unexpectedly long and worth exploring in more detail. Most often, semantic differences between the trial and the self-translation (102 times or over 40%) can be found in the realm of modification or characteristics of events, states, people, objects, as in example 2 (noisy

Table 8

	Trial translation	Self-translation
18	It could earn her <b>a packet</b> .	She could make <b>very good money</b> off <b>that tape</b> .
19	<b>You can</b> click a lighter on and stick you [sic] arm up to the elbow down the throat of a letterbox.	<b>Let's</b> light a lighter and stick one arm up to the elbow into a mailbox.

versus *illicit*). Another striking feature is the high number of differences in the presentation of a state of affairs: almost one third of semantic differences (or 78 times), a state of affairs is seen from a different point of view as in example 5. The self-translation further describes a remarkably high number of states of affairs (a total of 65) that are absent in the trial translation (*they rise to the occasion* in example 9, *that tastes of nothing but salt and that will turn into a mushy black nightmare before the bus hits Warsaw* in example 10, *in much the same way a cat – so elegant and precise when hunting – becomes rude and vulgar when playing with her prey* in example 12) but, at the same time, it lacks 21 states of affairs that the trial translation has (example 20). It may also be noted that 27 predicational or modificational differences are also a matter of different quantification (example 4), that coherence between states of affairs is different 27 times (example 7) and that there are 6 different cases of embedding (example 6) (Table 9).

The narrators in the trial translation and the self-translation further see things differently 206 times (layer 2). Most remarkable is, in fact, their attitude towards the state of affairs in terms of

desirability, which is different 31 times. Especially noteworthy here is the fact that out of those 31 times, the self-translating narrator's attitude of desire is slightly more negative towards the whole scene than that of the trial translating narrator's attitude as in example 10. The narrator's attitude towards the state of affairs in terms of belief is different 26 times as in example 8. There are nine instances in which the narrator's attitude towards the state of affairs in terms of expectation (as in example 9) is different.

As for the more formal characteristics, I investigated whether Verhaeghen's translation and the trial translation also differed from each other with respect to stylistic features. The result was a set of 41 cases of differences between the two translations. An inquiry into particular stylistic *figures*, such as parallelism, repetition, images and sounds, showed that both texts contain a comparable number: the self-translation has 18 figures and the trial translation 17. More conspicuous, however, is the use of different language varieties and registers (69 instances, examples 14 and 21). This number also includes five examples in which American English appears in the self-translation lexically (*sidewalk, center, posse, guys, elevator*) as opposed to the trial

Table 9

	Trial translation	Self-translation
20	<b>Does she actually know why?</b> Does she really know what she's doing?	Ø Does she know what she's doing?

Table 10

	Trial translation	Self-translation
21	This is no damsel in distress; she <b>gives</b> her assailants <b>as good as she gets</b> , but the boys are, of course, in the majority.	This is no damsel in distress – this lady is seriously <b>kicking the shit out of</b> those guys – but unfortunately, there's simply too many of them.

Table 11

	Trial translation	Self-translation
22	bananas and tinned salmon, <b>cans of whipped cream</b> , cheap porno mags	six-packs of undrinkable lager, tins of salmon that tastes of nothing but salt, <b>aerosol cans of rancid whipped cream</b> , cheapo shrink wrapped magazines

translation, which is written in British English (Table 10).

The formal feature investigation further yielded 47 different information distribution patterns (example 15) and 11 different techniques for dealing with a cultural reference (example 14, repeated below as example 22) (Table 11).

Summarizing, formulation differences between trial and self-translation, whether or not accompanied by significant meaning differences, were less frequent than the number of times that the narrators' perspectives differed, which in its turn was lower than the number of cases, more than half of all differences noted, in which the narrators in the trial translation and the self-translation could be said to have seen different things.

### Stage 2: Trial translation and self-translation versus source text

The second stage of the research compared passages that had been identified at stage 1 with their original correspondents, both from a semantic/pragmatic point of view and a formal point of view. Such a comparison would yield information about the extent to which either translation conceptualizes the original differently, i.e. 'betrays' the original. Since I assume that writers are better able at conceiving and reformulating what they themselves have written than third persons, I expected the trial translation to 'betray' the original more than the self-translation.

Findings, however, yielded the opposite result: in the majority of cases (558 instances or

Table 12

	Source text	Trial translation	Self-translation
23	Zonder uitzondering zijn <b>het</b> (back translation: they) politieke vluchtelingen uit het voormalige diepe Oosten.	<b>They</b> are, without exception, political refugees from the former deep East.	Without exception, <b>these young men</b> are all political refugees from the former deep
24	Er komt echter een moment waarop een groep vrienden die met de armen om elkaars schouders geslagen <b>over het trottoir</b> loopt, voor een slagorde kan worden aangezien, een wolvenhorde.	There comes a point, however, when a group of friends walking <b>along the pavement</b> with their arms around each other can be seen as a gang, a wolf pack.	But there is a point at which a group of friends parading <b>down the sidewalk</b> with their arms wrapped around each others' [sic] shoulders suddenly becomes a mob, a posse, a pack of wolves.
25	Lengte wordt vaak met leiderschap verward, zoals Hugo's zwijgzaamheid ook vaak voor diepzinnigheid wordt <b>versleten</b> . (back translation: mistaken)	Height is often confused with leadership, as Hugo's stillness is often <b>taken</b> for profundity.	Tallness often gets mistaken for leadership ability, just like Hugo's silence often gets <b>mistaken</b> for profundity.

83%) the self-translation differs from the source text more strongly than the trial translation (example 23). While 27 passages were undecided (example 24, only 87 passages (or 13%) show the trial translation to differ from the source text more strongly than the self-translation (example 25) (Table 12).

### **Discussion:**

#### **Verhaeghen's own voice**

The present investigation has led to two findings. Looking again at the definitions of 'voice' from the OED – "mode of expression or point of view in writing; a particular literary tone or style" – it is safe to say that the differences between Verhaeghen's self-translation and the trial translation are mostly a matter of point of view or a matter of tone. Indeed, when the trial and the self translation differ from each other, the differences are to be found mainly in the semantic/pragmatic field rather than as a mode of expression or a particular style: not even one quarter of all differences identified were related to the formal characteristics of 'voice'. Secondly, Verhaeghen's self-translation differs from the source text to a larger extent than the trial translation does.

If I therefore want to characterize what it is that Verhaeghen meant by referring to his 'own voice', I would conclude that it is a matter of 'point of view', the broad concept of 'voice', rather than a matter of voice in its narrow sense referring to the phonetic or formal features of the text only. In contrast with the trial translator, who remains very faithful to the source text in conformity with the norms of Dutch publishing houses, Verhaeghen has taken the freedom to insert other images, thoughts, states of affairs, etc. He is brokering his own originality and betraying it at the same time, and his powerful position as the author allows him to do so.

However, the differences between his source text and self-translation are too small to

conclude that Verhaeghen's self-translation is a new interpretation of his Dutch work in the same way that Beckett's English self-translations were new interpretations of the French versions (Fitch 1988), each language version describing its own world. Nevertheless, Verhaeghen's self-translation clearly bears traits of the uniqueness that a self-translation can create. In fact, many differences between Verhaeghen's translation and the trial translation point in the direction of a narrator telling his story for the second time, improving the first version, explaining passages that may have been unclear to readers of the source text, too, and expressing one's attitude more strongly as was the case with the undesirability of certain elements in the story describing Polish migrant shoppers. It is as if he wanted to capture the readers' attention for a longer time than he did with his Dutch-speaking audience, an idea which could be followed up in the future in the form of a reader response investigation, inquiring into the degree of reader-orientation of both the source text and the self-translation.

In other words, this self-translation, even though it has been proclaimed as expressing the writer's own voice, is a 'betrayal' of the original (Simon 2008) and Verhaeghen's American English voice differs from his own Flemish Dutch voice more than the trial translator's British English voice does. It is a self-betrayal, created by Verhaeghen's bilingualism, that has resulted in another cultural form of expression: in fact, his voice is mainly his view and the different views expressed in the self-translation are testimony to what could be called *a hybrid culture in himself*. An inquiry into the different literary voices of the novel – focalizations as writer, narrator and characters – and its self-translation, and an investigation into the genesis of the self-translation and the publisher's role may shed more light on this hybridity.

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## **Голос автора в романе**

### **Пола Верхагена «Omega Minor»:**

### **сравнительный анализ источника-оригинала,**

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*Автор предлагает к обсуждению проблему перевода автором собственного художественного произведения на иностранный язык. Предметом исследования стал хорошо известный на Западе роман бельгийского писателя и когнитивного психолога Пола Верхагена «Omega Minor», написанный в 2004 г. на голландском языке и переведённый автором же на английский в 2007 г. В данной статье представлен сравнительный семантический, прагматический и стилистический анализ трех текстов – источника-оригинала, пробных переводов и авторских переводов на английский. Автор называет причины и предпосылки появления авторских переводов в современной художественной литературе.*

*Ключевые слова: авторский перевод, пробный перевод, текст-источник, голос автора, голос переводчика, семантические/ прагматические/ стилистические расхождения.*

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