Self-Translating Authors in German-Language Contemporary Literature

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Abstract: The paper aims to analyse how self-translation fits into the discourse of translingual writing in German-language literature produced since the second half of the 20th century. The paper shows that the phenomenon can be conceived in different ways, along a continuum ranging from more 'literal' understandings to metaphorical extensions of the term. The complexity of self-translation will be examined through the example of the following authors: Carmine Abate, Franco Biondi, Zwetelina Damjanova, Sabine Eschgfäller, Gerhard Kofler, Pavel Kohout, Yüksel Pazarkaya, Barbara Pumhösel, Milan Ráček, Yoko Tawada and Vladimir Vertlib.

Keywords: self-translation, literary translingualism, German-language literature, multilingualism

Introduction

In this article I would like to shed light on self-translation in contemporary German-language literature as a particular aspect of literary translingualism, which has been defined as "the phenomenon of writers who create texts in more than one language or in a language other than their primary one" (Kellman 2019, 337). This definition, which was also taken up in the influential *Routledge Handbook of Literary Translingualism* (Kellman and Lvovich 2022, xvii), is not free of ambiguity, especially with regard to the expression "primary language": as used here, it denotes the language someone has acquired first, rather than the one which is used most frequently to communicate with, or the more dominant one. At this point it is worth noting that learning a language later in life does not necessarily mean one is less proficient in it – people may possibly become more proficient in their second (or third or fourth, etc.) language than in their first acquired language, depending on a multiplicity of factors –, and that competence and/or dominance may change over time. Moreover, the idea that translingual authors are individuals who "create texts in more than one language" seems to imply that literary multilingualism represents a sort of exception. Yet recent research on literary multilingualism is based on the assumption that no text can be considered monolingual since it is always subject to some degree of interaction between different languages and/or language varieties: "contrary to the unspoken conviction of many people, it is not the norm, neither for persons, nor for (literary) texts, to be monolingual, and [. . .] linguistic diversity does not typically come into being when 'native speakers' or texts of/in different languages are juxtaposed" (Dembeck 2017, 3). In fact, literary multilingualism cannot primarily be reduced to its manifest appearance, but it is also often

present in a latent form (Radaelli 2011, 54–61; Blum-Barth 2021, 11–21). In view of these considerations, the main feature of literary translingualism considered here is the fact that translingual authors write – although not necessarily in an exclusive way – in a language (or languages) acquired later in life.

In the last decades of the 20th century, the German studies have increasingly focused on translingual literature, which resulted in numerous publications on the so-called *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (literature named after guest workers who immigrated to West Germany between 1955 and 1973), *Migrantenliteratur* (lit. 'migrant literature'), *Migrationsliteratur* ('migration literature'), etc. The differences between (and the ambiguities connected with) these expressions will not be explored here since they are not relevant to the present discussion. It is worth mentioning, however, that in the wake of the debate about these phenomena in German-speaking countries, literary prizes have been created specifically for German-writing translingual authors, most notably the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis (awarded between 1985 and 2017) in Germany and the schreiben zwischen den kulturen prize (created in 1997) in Austria, which demonstrates that translingual literature has been enjoying great interest not only from scholars but also from the German-language readership and the literary market. By examining the oeuvre of the winners of these prizes and other translingual writers of contemporary German-language literature, we can see that self-translation is a recurring aspect that appears in different forms and settings, the most obvious being when authors translate their own texts into another language. Considering these premises, this paper aims to analyse how self-translation fits into the discourse of translingual writing in the field of German-language literature produced since the second half of the 20th century. The first chapter will provide an overview of the main definitions given of self-translation, showing how the phenomenon can be intended in translingual literature. The second chapter will examine the complexity of self-translation within contemporary German-speaking literature through the example of renowned translingual authors, some of whom were awarded with the Chamisso-Preis or the schreiben zwischen den kulturen prize: Carmine Abate, Franco Biondi, Zwetelina Damjanova, Sabine Eschgfäller, Gerhard Kofler, Pavel Kohout, Yüksel Pazarkaya, Barbara Pumhösel, Milan Ráček, Yoko Tawada and Vladimir Vertlib. These authors belong to different generations, have different cultural and artistic backgrounds, translated their works for different purposes (be they poetic, editorial, commercial, ideological, etc.) as well as from/to different languages (with the common denominator being German), and thus are representative of the wide range of forms self-translation can take among German-writing multilingual authors. Moreover, some of them have expressed themselves explicitly about self-translation. Therefore, the paper will look at the extent to which they fit into one or other definition provided in the previous section, and how they

position themselves as self-translators. Finally, the analysis in section three will focus on one writer, Yoko Tawada, whose self-translated works embody different modes of conceiving self-translation.

1. Definitions of self-translation

As will be shown in this section, the definition of self-translation is anything but clear, which is firstly due to the fact that this phenomenon cannot be clearly and solely classified as belonging to the field of translation studies, nor to literary studies (Gentes 2016, 25). The view that self-translation should rather be considered a topic of translation studies is held, for example, by the AUTOTRAD international research group (AUTOTRAD 2007), by Patricia López-Gay (López-Gay 2007), and by Simona Anselmi. The latter offers a translation-based overview of self-translation and the diverse attitudes several self-translating authors adopt toward this practice, relying on extended concepts of translation in terms of rewriting starting from the presumption that "[s]elf-translations cannot be distinguished from normal translations on the sole assumption that they recreate the original texts, since this is what all translations do" (Anselmi 2012, 15). The scholar argues that self-translation is "first and foremost a translational phenomenon, which deserves to be studied as such, and not as an exceptional writing practice" (19).

For Dolors Poch Olivé, self-translation is to be understood as a feature of multilingual writing instead, because the relationship between self-translating authors and their languages, as well as the "plurality of visions" emerging from their multilingualism, should be considered the main trait of interest:

> La pluralidad de visiones sugiere, desde luego que autotraducirse no resuelve lo que podría denominarse 'el problema de la traducción' sino que, al contrario, pone de manifiesto un aspecto fundamental de la operación de escribir: las relaciones que mantiene el escritor con cada una de las lenguas que maneja y que determinan el carácter que tendrán las versiones de su obra. (Poch Olivé 2002, 9)[1]

Moreover, we should take into account that self-translators may pursue different goals than allograph translators, especially as respects self-representation: "A translator is bound by the demand of consistency in his translation method. A self-translator, however, is often also expected to project a coherent self-image, which may require

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1 "The plurality of visions suggests, of course, that self-translation does not solve what could be called 'the problem of translation' but, on the contrary, highlights a fundamental aspect of the operation of writing: the relationships that the writer maintains with each of the languages he handles and that determine the character that the versions of his work will have." All English translations in the footnotes are mine unless otherwise indicated.

rewriting of the original. This is not necessarily an expression of freedom. It is simply another norm to be reckoned with" (Boyden and De Bleeker 2013, 181).

The perspective applied in this paper is more akin to this approach than to that followed by Anselmi, as it allows extension of the meaning of self-translation to include more broad understandings.

One of the best-known definitions of self-translation is the one provided by Anton Popovič in 1976: "the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself" (Popovič 1976, 19). This is commonly considered the first definition of the phenomenon, however later scholars have found that Popovič resumed and largely adopted a definition Oleksandr Finkel´ had given in Ukrainian in 1929 (Finkel´ uses the term "auto-translation"), and which was translated into English by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek only in 1995: "[t]he translation of an original work into another language by the producer of the text to be translated (by the author himself)" (de Zepetnek in Kalnychenko and Kamovnikova 2019).[2]

Dieter Lamping interprets self-translation in a similar way: „[u]nter Selbstübersetzung verstehe ich den Fall, dass ein Autor sich als sein Übersetzer betätigt und ein eigenes Werk übersetzt"[3] (Lamping 1992, 213). However, Lamping fails to specify if self-translation is to be understood as the act or the result of translating. In this regard, Rainier Grutman claims that "the term 'self-translation' can refer both to the act of translating one's own writings into another language and the result of such an undertaking" (Grutman 2009, 257).[4]

Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson consider self-translation rather the product of translation. Speaking about literary multilingualism in relation to self-translation, they define self-translation as a text "authored by a writer who can compose in different languages and who translates his or her texts from one language into another" (Hokenson and Munson 2007, 1). Eva Gentes and Trish Van Bolderen, the authors of the chapter on self-translation in the *Routledge Handbook of Literary Translingualism*, are rather vague on this aspect (although it seems to me that their focus lies more on the process than on the product), as they define self-translation as "the phenomenon of an author producing an additional text by translating their own written work into another language" (Gentes and Van Bolderen 2022, 369).

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2 Kalnychenko and Kamovnikova rightly focus on the fact that studies conducted in Eastern Europe are widely unknown in Western European countries, mainly because they have not been translated into the main (i.e. the dominant) languages of international research.

3 "the case where an author acts as his translator and translates his own work".

4 At this point it should be noted that in a later publication Rainier Grutman distinguishes between "autotraducteurs sédentaires", who do not translate their work as a result of migration, and "autotraducteurs migrateurs", who, on the other hand, write and publish in a language that they have only acquired after migration (see Grutman 2015). The authors cited in the current study belong to both categories.

Generally speaking, in the 21st century self-translation has been increasingly ana-lysed, resulting in a number of publications, which are systematically listed in the *Bibliography on Self-Translation* edited by Eva Gentes (see Gentes [2023]). Existing research on self-translation consists of numerous individual studies, most of which deal with the best-known self-translators of modernity, especially Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett (overview in Gentes 2016). In the context of postcolonial studies, more and more research has been conducted on authors from Africa and South Amer-ica (Weigel 2019), while the theoretical discourse has emphasised hybridity (hybrid cultures, hybrid languages, and hybrid identities), in particular the relationship between literature, migration and multilingualism (Falceri et al. 2017, xii). As a result, the "self" in "self-translation" – i.e. how the self-translator emerges in the text – has been increasingly stressed. In this regard, Sigrid Weigel claimed that "self-translation denotes the process of translating one's own text into a different language than it was written in. But the word also implies the possibility to read it as translating the self, that is, transferring the self into another situation or condition" (Weigel 2018, 21). To give an example, the volume *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture* (Cordingley 2013) provides interdisciplinary analyses of several well-known and less-known self-translators and their works in the light of hybridity – without, however, exploring the German-speaking context in depth.[5]

As far as German-language literature is concerned, Barbara Ivančić noted that interest in self-translation in the German-speaking world goes hand in hand with the study of "migrant literature" (Ivančić 2013, 102) as well as with a more systematic exam-ination of literary multilingualism. In other words, the analysis of translingual authors has led to increasing attention being paid to self-translation in contemporary German-language literature. In this context, self-translation has been considered a form of rewriting, given that self-translators have to interpret the text as in an allograph trans-lation, but they also need to mediate between two language worlds that are not only reflected in the text but are also an integral part of their being (100). In this scenario, the focus lies on the writing process rather than on the product of translation, as also emerges from Kristine J. Anderson's differentiation between allograph (she calls it "normal" or "ordinary") translation and self-translation:

> *Normal translation* [. . .] is the result of a two-stage process of reading-writing, whereas self-translation
> is a *re-enactment* of the act of writing which produced the original text. In other words, ordinary transla-

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5   The analysis of German-language self-translators is limited to single case studies: Rainier Grutman examines twenti-eth-century Nobel Prize winning authors who self-translated their texts. Among them, the Danish poet and novelist Karl Adolph Gjellerup chose German as a target-language (Grutman 2013, 70); Rainer Guilden explores the case of the philo-sopher Vilém Flusser who wrote and translated his texts into four languages, including German (Guilden 2013, 95–109).

tion is the *reproduction of a product*, whereas self-translation is the *repetition of a process*. As other writers on the topic have said, the self-translation is really a *re-writing*. (Anderson 2000, 1251; italics in the original)

Some scholars have gone so far as to say that the very fact of writing in a second or third acquired language can be seen as a kind of self-translation, since the writer's world of thought is literally translated into another language while writing. Elin-Maria Evangelista's interpretation of self-translation is to be understood precisely in this sense: "I use the term to designate the translation process occurring when a bilingual writer chooses to write in a second or acquired language, translation thereby forming an integral part of the 'original' creative writing process" (Evangelista 2013, 178). The scholar thus assumes that translingual authors mainly think in their first acquired language even when writing in another. This presumption seems to imply that writers never think 'originally' in a language acquired later in life when writing, which may be the case. However, according to this understanding, self-translation concerns the creative writing process itself, and therefore goes beyond the practices observed in "traditional" (i.e. allograph) translations: translingual authors do not translate from a source text (the "original"), as self-translation already takes place in their mind. Evangelista re-proposes an idea that Kristine Anderson had already put forward in 2000 when she claimed that "the mere act of writing in a language not one's first is, in a sense, a type of self-translation" (Anderson 2000, 1251). Steven Kellman underlined too that self-translation is an essential part of life and writing for translingual authors (Kellman 2003, ix).

Sigrid Weigel expanded the notion of the original in self-translation when looking at the case of a text written in an author's second/third/fourth language and then translated into their first language. Weigel criticised the idea that this process can be seen as a "reverse-translation" since it "implies the hypothetical existence of an invisible text to precede the text at first written in the second or foreign language" (Weigel 2018, 33). It follows that "the concept of original gets displaced in an inaccessible obscure inner realm where it leads a ghostly existence as a hypothetical pre-text, preceding any linguistic manifestation" (ibid.). Instead, she suggests considering translingual writing a form of translation where there is no original, and where

the author can never be entirely sure of actually saying what he/she wishes to express – at least less so than in the first language [. . .], the uncertainty that comes with writing in a foreign language is not caused by one's own unconscious. It instead comes from a *linguistic unconscious*, namely from a limited familiarity with the ambiguity and nuances, with the sub-tones and overtones of certain words, expressions, and sayings in the foreign language. (Weigel 2018, 34; italics in the original)

Weigel makes an interesting point about the "uncertainty" a translingual author experiences when writing; however, I would not limit such possibility to "writing in a foreign language": multilingual authors writing in their first acquired language may experience uncertainty as well (perhaps due to language transfer). Moreover, Weigel's restriction seems to imply that writers are more proficient in the language they acquired first, though this is not necessarily always the case.

Another aspect when speaking about self-translation is that for some scholars it is related to questions of subjectivity and identity construction (Arrula Ruiz 2017; Wilson 2017). According to these scholars, self-translation is one of the possible strategies authors resort to in order to (re)locate themselves in the tension between different languages and cultures, and to negotiate their own identity (Castillo García 2006). This conception further expands the concept of self-translation and goes beyond the scope of the current analysis, since it deals with the purpose rather than with the nature of self-translation.

In the light of this brief outline, it can be noted that the definitions of self-translation range from a more 'literal' interpretation (Finkel´, Popovič, Lamping, Grutman, Hokensen and Munson, Gentes and Van Bolderen), with focus on the process and/or on the product of translation, to a metaphorical extension (Evangelista, Anderson, Kellman, Weigel). The different conception of the phenomenon is closely linked to the question of when the self-translating process starts – with the translation of an existing text or in the mind of a translingual writer – and consequently whether there has to be an original text in order to talk about self-translation. As Susan Bassnett put it:

> the term "self-translation" is problematic in several respects, but principally because it compels us to consider the problem of the existence of an original. The very definition of translation presupposes an original somewhere else, so when we talk about self-translation, the assumption is that there will be another previously composed text from which the second text can claim its origin. (Bassnett 2013, 15)

At this point, it is useful to investigate how translingual German-writing authors have expressed themselves about "original" and self-translation. For this purpose, in the following paragraphs an overview of translingual authors of contemporary German-speaking literature who have acted as self-translators and given their opinion on self-translation will be given. These paragraphs will show to whom the more 'literal' definitions provided apply (when the source text exists and is then translated by the author into another language, be it their first, second, third, etc., acquired language), who, by contrast, embodies the metaphorical extensions of the phenomenon, and some cases that cannot be easily placed in either category. Although I have doubts about considering the very writing in a second or third language a form of self-trans-

lation, examples of writers who embody broader interpretations (such as Weigel's) will be offered here as well, since some authors do thematise mental translation processes in their translingual writing in terms of self-translation.

2. Overview of self-translating authors in contemporary German-speaking literature

2.1. Self-translations of published texts

In this chapter I will give some examples of authors who translated themselves starting from a published text that coincides with the "original", according to more 'literal' definitions of self-translation (Finkel´, Popovič, etc.).

Some translingual writers opted for this solution at the beginning of their literary activity. A significant case is author of Turkish origin Yüksel Pazarkaya (b. 1940), who translated himself several times (for a complete list of his self-translated works as well as an interview with the author on self-translation see Öğünmez 2019, in particular 127). For example, the German-language novel *Ich und die Rose* (Pazarkaya 2002) was published in 2002 as a self-translation of the Turkish version *Ben Araniyor* (Pazarkaya 1989). Interestingly, there is a great discrepancy between the meaning of the Turkish and the German titles (lit. "The self-seeker" and "Me and the rose" respectively), with the first one showing more manifestly the novel's main theme, i.e. the protagonist's search for identity. Another example of self-translated work is the children's book *Wal-Baby* (Pazarkaya 2008), which was published in German 20 years after the Turkish original *Balina'nın Bebeği* (Pazarkaya 1988). In this case the German and the Turkish titles can be translated as "Baby Whale".

In Pazarkaya's case, translating his own texts at the beginning of his literary career represented an intermediate stage that led to writing directly in German. The author claimed that the first step consisted of his attempt to translate poems by German poets into Turkish, before translating poems by Turkish poets into German and then translating his own texts into German:

> Zuerst versuchte ich einzelne Gedichte deutscher Dichter ins Türkische zu übersetzen. Erst dann wagte ich, Gedichte von türkischen Dichtern ins Deutsche zu übertragen [. . .]. Erst als ich zu Lesungen eingeladen wurde, versuchte ich, eigene Texte ins Deutsche zu übertragen bzw. gelegentlich mich direkt in Deutsch zu üben.[6] (Öğünmez 2019, 125–126)

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6 "At first I tried to translate individual poems by German poets into Turkish. Only then did I dare to translate poems by Turkish poets into German [. . .]. Only when I was invited to readings did I try to translate my own texts into German or occasionally to practice directly in German."

Translating his own works mainly served the practical purpose of reaching German-language readers and, in fact, Pazarkaya has always translated himself from Turkish into German.

A particularly interesting case is Carmine Abate (b. 1954), an author of Italian origin who was raised in the Arbëreshë community[7], moved to Germany after graduating and then, years later, to Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol. He published his first short story collection *Den Koffer und weg!* (Abate 1984, lit. "The Suitcase and off!") in German and then translated it into Italian (*Il muro dei muri*, Abate 1993, lit. "The Wall of Walls"), although his first language is Arbëreshë, a language derived from the Tosk dialect spoken in southern Albania which is written using the same alphabet as Standard Albanian but sounds more archaic. It can be assumed that, on the one hand, Abate's decision to self-translate is due to the fact that he wanted to reach a different readership. On the other hand, the reason may be aesthetic, meaning that the author wanted to find a synthesis between his different cultural experiences, as the following statement may suggest:

> se per i tedeschi ero solo uno straniero; per gli altri stranieri, un italiano; per gli italiani, un meridionale o 'terrone'; per i meridionali, un calabrese; per i calabresi, un arbëresh, un germanese o, da qualche anno, un trentino [. . .], io per me ero semplicemente io, Carmine Abate, cioè la sintesi di tutte queste definizioni, una persona che ha più lingue e più radici [. . .] da allora ho deciso di vivere per addizione [. . .], senza dover scegliere per forza tra Nord e Sud, tra 'lingua del cuore' e 'lingue del pane'.[8] (Abate 2011, 79–80)

Although this assertion does not refer to self-translation, it is plausible that Abate's choice to self-translate is part of his aesthetic intention not to combine "North and South", the "language of the heart" – the one spoken with friends and neighbours (Abate 2011, 77), i.e. Arbëreshë and maybe Italian as well – and the "languages of the

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7   The Arbëreshë are an ethnolinguistic group of Albanians located in the southern Italian regions of Abruzzi, Molise, Puglia, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily. They arrived in several waves of migration starting from the early 13th century. One of the main influxes was in the 15th century, when Gjeorgj Skanderberg, who unified the Albanian tribes against Ottoman invasion, reached an agreement with the Pope as a result of which his people were allowed to settle in Italy. In the early 1900s, a large number migrated from southern Italy to the United States. This loss was compensated in the 1990s, when Albanians began immigrating to Arbëreshë communities after the fall of communism in their homeland. Today, there are estimated to be approximately 100,000 members of the Arbëreshë community residing in 50 communities in southern Italy. Https://nuitalian.org/2020/10/26/griko-arberesh-communities/ (14/06/2023).

8   "for the Germans I was just a foreigner; for the other foreigners, an Italian; for the Italians, a southerner or 'terrone'; for the southerners, a Calabrian; for the Calabrians, an arbëreshë and, when I went back to my arbëreshë village, a Germanese or, for some years, a Trentino [. . .] for me I was simply me, Carmine Abate, that is, the synthesis of all these definitions, a person who has more than one language and more than one root [. . .] since then I have decided to live by addition [. . .], without necessarily having to choose between North and South, between 'language of the heart' and 'languages of the bread'."

bread" (i.e. the languages of work), namely Italian and German. Whatever motivation led the author to self-translate, and even if he translated into what can be assumed to be his second language, this case still falls under the category of self-translation in the strict sense.

A writer who translated into his first language is Milan Ráček (b. 1937). The Czech-Austrian author wrote *Leo: Ein Postskriptum* (Ráček 1999, lit. "Leo: A postscript") in German and then translated it into Czech a few years later (*Leo*, Ráček 2002) with the help of a proofreader. The purpose was to reach the Czech audience, and apparently he translated the novel himself because the Czech publisher could not afford a translator (Cornejo 2010, 519–520).

Pavel Kohout (b. 1928), who is also an Austrian author of Czech origin, self-translated several theatrical plays from German into Czech, i.a. *Patt oder Spiel der Könige* (Kohout 1987) / *Pat, aneb, Hra králů* (Kohout 1991), both titles can be translated as "Pat, or the game of kings"; *Eine kleine Machtmusik* (Kohout 2005) / *Malá hudba moci* (Kohout 2007), lit. "A Little Night Music". His novels, on the contrary, were translated by others. The reason he gave for translating the plays by himself was the freedom to rewrite not only the translation, but the "original" as well:

> weil ich sie [die Texte] dabei wieder ändern konnte, weil ich mit dem Stück machen konnte, was ich wollte. Jede weitere Fassung ist reifer als die Urfassung, weil man nach einiger Zeit mehr weiß, als was man damals geschrieben hat. Aufgrund des zeitlichen Abstands können so neue Ideen eingearbeitet werden. [. . .] Eine Übersetzung aber macht den Abstand noch größer, weil plötzlich das Buch entzaubert ist.[9] (Cornejo 2010, 478)

The author addresses an aspect that is significant for some authors in the next section too (especially for Franco Biondi), specifically the fact that the text written first, the "original", is influenced by the process of mental self-translating and can subsequently be changed in light of the result of translation. Kohout does not clarify how this rewriting is implemented in concrete terms, considering that the source text has already been published. However, since self-translation involved only theatre plays, we could imagine that the author could have given instructions on how the respective plays are to be staged in German, after he had completed the Czech translation.

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9 "because I could change them [the texts] again in the process, because I could do what I wanted with the play. Each subsequent version is more mature than the original one, because after some time you know more than what you wrote at the time. Because of the time gap, new ideas can be incorporated. [. . .] A translation, however, makes the distance even greater, because suddenly the book is disenchanted."

2.2. Self-translation within the same work

This section deals with poets who first wrote their poems in one language and then translated their compositions into at least one other language, publishing both the "original" and the self-translation within the same work. What is interesting is that sometimes the line between original and translation is blurred, since in some cases it is difficult to determine in which language the first version was written.

The Bulgarian-born Austrian author Zwetelina Damjanova (b. 1979) writes in German, Bulgarian and Spanish, a language spoken in her family as her mother spent her teenage years in Cuba. In her poetry collection *Аз und tú* (Damjanova 2012) the author mixes these three languages through mutual self-translation. Each poem is multilingual in itself, as each individual version consists of different languages: the poems have been composed in three stanzas, with each stanza written in a different language, then one stanza has been translated into another of the three languages, which means that each poem can be read in one or two languages. Therefore, this volume is not a conventional multilingual edition in which a monolingual text is juxtaposed with its German, Spanish or Bulgarian translation, because each poem already contains several languages and is rendered by another text that is also multilingual. Damjanova revealed that her artistic strategy stems from the intimate urge not to have to choose her writing language from one of the three languages she uses in everyday life:

> Ich bin mit diesen drei Sprachen aufgewachsen und habe beim Schreiben bis dahin immer das Gefühl
> gehabt, eine Wahl treffen zu müssen, in welcher Sprache ein Text entstehen wird. Bei diesem Projekt
> habe ich mir die Freiheit genommen, alle drei Sprachen zu verwenden, so wie ich es auch im Leben tue.[10]
> (Damjanova n.d.)

Considering that Damjanova's self-translation process serves to search for a personal, hybrid dimension, this could be seen as an example of the definition given by Sigrid Weigel, where the "self" in self-translation is emphasised.

The volume of poems *Giri e rigiri, laufend* (Biondi 2005) – lit. "Rounds and Turns, Running" – by the German author of Italian origin Franco Biondi (b. 1947) is exemplary of how the boundary between original and self-translation can be extremely blurred. The volume was created by combining the two poetry cycles *I mi zir* and *laufend*: Biondi wrote the first one, the title of which is an expression from the dialect of Romagna and means "my rounds" (but also "my turns"), between 1989 and 1993 while he was on a reading tour of Italy, and translated it from Italian into German almost ten years later;

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10 "I grew up with these three languages and until then, when writing, I always felt I had to make a choice in which language a text would be created. In this project, I took the liberty of using all three languages, just as I do in life."

the second cycle, *laufend*, was written in German and then translated into Italian. The author stresses the fact that his poems are not to be considered translations in a narrow sense, because although they correspond to the content of the respective "original", they show differences in terms of connotation, they express distinct emotional worlds:

> Diese Gedichte sind nicht übersetzt worden. Anders als der Übersetzer, der ein Werk in eine andere Sprache überträgt und dabei einen Zwang zur Übertragungstreue hat, verfügt der zweisprachige Lyriker über die wunderbare Möglichkeit, die gleichen Wahrnehmungen, Gedanken und Gefühle in zwei Sprachen sprechen zu lassen. Zwar gleichen sich die Inhalte, zwar meinen die Worte das Gleiche, doch in jeder der beiden Sprachen schwingt etwas anderes mit, auch wenn es sich stets um graduelle Unterschiede handelt. [. . .] Insofern bewegt sich ein Zweisprachiger wie ich in zwei parallelen Sprachwelten. Aus diesem Grund habe ich die Gedichte nicht wortgetreu von einer Sprache in die andere übersetzt.[11] (Biondi 2005, 119)

By saying that these texts cannot be seen as self-translations, Biondi means he has rewritten them and, in doing so, the emotional component has played an important role. According to Claudia Tatasciore, self-translation in Franco Biondi's work can be understood as a continuation of the creative writing process which can potentially continue endlessly (Tatasciore 2013, 369): the first text (the "original") is changed by translation because the additional perspective of the other language is added, then the "revised original" is translated one more time, but in doing so the "second version" of the original is changed again, and so on.

A few more brief examples. Fruttuoso Piccolo (b. 1953), who was born in Italy and moved to Germany when he was 19 years old, publishing the bilingual edition *Arlecchino Gastarbeiter – Harlekin Gastarbeiter* (Piccolo 1985). He first wrote the Italian version of the poems and then translated them into German (Chiellino 2005).

Gerhard Kofler (b. 1949), who was born in South Tyrol, grew up bilingual and settled in Austria, published numerous collections of poetry in which he juxtaposed the German and Italian versions. At the beginning of his poetic career, he wrote the German poems parallel to the Italian equivalent, but since the publication of the volume *Die Rückseite der Geographie* (Kofler 1988, lit. "The Reverse Side of Geography"), he has first written the Italian version of his works and has then translated them into German.

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11   "These poems have not been translated. Unlike the translator, who translates a work into another language and has a compulsion to be faithful to the translation, the bilingual lyricist has the wonderful possibility of letting the same perceptions, thoughts and feelings speak in two languages. Although the contents are the same, although the words mean the same thing, something else resonates in each of the two languages, even if it is always a matter of gradual differences. [. . .] In this respect, a bilingual like me moves in two parallel language worlds. For this reason, I have not translated the poems verbatim from one language to the other."

Sabine Eschgfäller (b. 1976), an author born in South Tyrol who studied in Austria and has worked in the Czech Republic for numerous years, published the volume of poetry titled *In die Ecke gesprochen*/Řečeno *do kouta* (Eschgfäller 2005, lit. "Spoken into the Corner"), which she translated into Czech in collaboration with another translator.

Barbara Pumhösel (b. 1959), an Austrian-born writer who lives in Italy, writes in both German and Italian; she normally publishes in either language although she first wrote the poems in the collection *pflaumenbäume/prugni* (Pumhösel 2005, lit. "Plum Trees") in Italian and then translated them into German.

In the cases just described, it is quite plausible to imagine that the compositions written first were influenced by the respective translations. It is difficult to fit these works into any of the given definitions of self-translation: on the one hand, translation forms an integral part of the "original" creative writing process, which may bring it closer to Evangelista's understanding of the phenomenon. On the other hand, there are still two texts written in two (or more) different languages, which perhaps is closer to Anderson's conception of self-translation as a "repetition of a process", a "real re-writing". In this regard it is worth mentioning the distinction Rainier Grutman makes between delayed[12] and simultaneous self-translations: "There appears to be a fundamental difference between what could be labelled 'simultaneous auto-translations' (that are executed while the first version is still in process) and 'delayed auto-translations' (published after completion or even publication of the original manuscript)" (Grutman 1998, 20). The texts cited in this paragraph can all be considered simultaneous self-translations, and lie in an intermediate space between more literal definitions and metaphorical extensions of the concept of self-translation.

2.3. Metaphorical extensions of self-translation

Austrian writer of Russian-Jewish origin Vladimir Vertlib (b. 1966) gained his fame through the short story *Abschiebung* (Vertlib 1995, lit. "Extradition") and his debut novel *Zwischenstationen* (Vertlib 1999, lit. "Intermediate Stations"). Both works are autobiographically tinged and are partly based on the diaries the author wrote in Russian as a teenager when he was in the USA and which he then translated into German after he had settled in Austria. Self-translation was not done starting from a text that was published as an independent work (the diaries written in Russian were not intended for publica-

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12 In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* published in 2009, Grutman uses the expression "consecutive self-translation" instead of "delayed self-translation" (see Grutman 2009, 259). The fact that the "self-translation" replaced "auto-translation" was explained by Simona Anselmi as follows: "This change in terminology reflects the growing use of the term 'self-translation' in most recent studies and research publication in English, and obviates the confusion created by 'auto-translation', which also signifies 'automatic translation', i.e. computer-mediated translation" (Anselmi 2012, 17, footnote 2).

tion), but from notes that served as the basis for literary writing. This could be considered a borderline case of self-translation in the strict sense, since there wasn't "an original somewhere else, [. . .] another previously composed text from which the second text can claim its origin", according to Susan Bassnett's definition reported in section 1. But interestingly, Vertlib spoke about this process, underlining different moments in which a "mental translation" – "der gedankliche Übersetzungsprozess" (Vertlib 2017, 197) – took place: in the first step, Vertlib put into words his experiences from adolescence and enriched them with fictional elements; then, in the 1990s, he translated these thoughts (written down in Russian) into German from an adult's perspective; finally, another kind of self-translation took place within the same language (German), specifically from everyday language into literary language:

> Die Übersetzung war natürlich schon wichtig. Aber noch wichtiger war der gedankliche Übersetzungsprozess aus diesem fiktiven Tagebuch, das ja damals schon eine Interpretation der Wirklichkeit war und fiktionale Elemente enthielt, in eine Perspektive der 1990er Jahre, zwölf, dreizehn Jahre später. Da habe ich die Ereignisse selber schon anders eingeordnet und ein anderes Vokabular gewählt für manche Teile, ob bewusst oder unbewusst. Und dann die Übersetzung dieser Übersetzung in Literatur, also aus einer eher banalen Sprache in eine Literatursprache. Jeder dieser Schritte im Schreibprozess ist Interpretation.[13] (Vertlib 2017, 197)

In this case, it is difficult to speak of the existence of an "original". Vertlib's self-translation is, rather, comparable to a mental process of multilingual writing as defined by Anderson (2000), Kellman (2003), and Weigel (2018). This mental translation process from Russian into German is sometimes reflected – as so often in the work of translingual authors – in the sentence structure, in the intonation, and in some idioms that are taken from the first language and translated literally into German. In Vladimir Vertlib's work, the literal translation of Russian idioms is comparatively rare: one of the few examples is „Man soll das Fell eines nicht erlegten Bären nicht zerteilen"[14] (Vertlib 2017, 203). Such self-translations function largely as a stylistic device and are used deliberately according to the author's aesthetic ideas. Nevertheless, these translation procedures from Russian also take place latently, to some extent,

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13 "The translation was important, of course. But even more important was the mental translation process from this fictional diary, which at that time was already an interpretation of reality and contained fictional elements, into a perspective of the 1990s, twelve, thirteen years later. By then I had already classified the events themselves differently and chosen a different vocabulary for some parts, whether consciously or unconsciously. And then the translation of this translation into literature, that is, from a rather banal language into a literary language. Each of these steps in the writing process is interpretation."

14 "You should not split the skin of an unkilled bear."

weil das Russische [. . .] mitschwingt in der Idiomatik und im Tonfall. Das ist keine bewusste Übersetzung. Erst nachträglich fällt mir auf, wie stark gerade bei den Szenen, die in Russland angesiedelt und eigentlich auf Russisch gedacht sind, das Russische mitschwingt. [. . .] Da bringt offenbar der Tonfall des Russischen diese Idiomatik mit sich, die ich dann in ein korrektes Deutsch transformiere, denn wenn ich die Bilder eins zu eins übersetzen würde, würden sie nicht funktionieren. Das mache ich nur ganz, ganz selten, wenn es passt.[15] (Vertlib 2017, 203)

Although Vertlib has focused on the translation process that takes place in his mind when he writes in German, he generally takes a rather critical stance towards (self-)translation, being convinced that the result of a translation process cannot fully meet his aesthetic expectations. Indeed, reflecting on the fact that multilingualism implies not only advantages but also reduction and loss, since there are areas in which a multilingual individuum is still de facto monolingual, the author added the following: "Der monoglotte Außenbereich zwingt entweder zur Selbstbeschränkung [. . .] oder zur Übersetzung. Übersetzung aber ist sowieso immer eine Fiktion. Je perfekter sie zu sein scheint, desto weniger gelingt sie einem"[16] (Vertlib 2012, 61). This explains why he never translated into Russian any of his novels published in German.

A couple more examples of metaphorical extensions of self-translation. Multilingual aspects in works written by the French-German author Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt have been studied several times, and some of them have been attributed to self-translation (in this regard see i.a. Willer 2007; Thome 2008; Guldin 2009). In this case this concerns a mental self-translation, which falls under Evangelista's and Kellman's definitions.

Finally, the Swiss author of Slovak origin Ilma Rakusa (b. 1946) should be mentioned: Gabriella Sgambati understands self-translation in Rakusa's works as a "translation of the self" (Sgambati 2017), which, brings us back to Sigrid Weigel's view of the phenomenon.

3. Yoko Tawada: one author, different modes of conceiving self-translation
German writer of Japanese origin Yoko Tawada (b. 1960), who writes and publishes both in German and in Japanese, has translated several of her works herself, mainly from German into Japanese and only once from Japanese into German. I will start with this case.

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15 "because Russian [. . .] resonates in the idiom and in the tone. This is not a conscious translation. Only afterwards do I notice how strongly Russian resonates, especially in the scenes that are set in Russia and are actually intended in Russian. [. . .] Obviously, the Russian tone brings this idiom with it, which I then transform into correct German, because if I were to translate the images one-to-one, they wouldn't work. I do that only very, very rarely, when it fits."

16 "The monoglot exterior forces one either to limit oneself [. . .] or to translate. Translation, however, is always a fiction anyway. The more perfect it seems, the less it succeeds."

The German novel *Etüden im Schnee* (Tawada 2014, lit. "Etudes in the Snow") was written after the Japanese version *Yuki no renshūsei* (Tawada 2011, lit. "Snow Practitioner"), which is a unique case in the writer's literary oeuvre. This is due to the fact that Tawada finds translating into German much more strenuous than translating into her first language:

> Das ist viel schwieriger als umgekehrt. Denn auf Japanisch schreibe ich sehr – wie soll ich das denn sagen? „frei" ist falsch, aber – gesetzlos und wild, und das passt überhaupt nicht. Das kann ich nicht hinterher in die deutsche Grammatik hineinpressen. Aber das habe ich dann gemacht. Erst war es sehr schwierig, und ich dachte, ich muss das ganz umschreiben. Aber umschreiben kann man es auch nicht [. . .]. Und so bin ich dann wieder zurück in die treue Übersetzung, und die war auch unmöglich. Und so kam ich wieder in die Freiheit und so habe ich mich mehrmals hin- und herbewegt.[17] (Weissmann 2018)

Etüden im Schnee has been translated into many other languages, usually not starting from the Japanese version but mainly from the German (except for the Chinese translation), as if it were a second original. The author herself has confirmed that the German translation should be understood as an independent work, and that "there are two originals" of this work: „Bei *Etüden im Schnee* würde ich sagen, dass es zwei Originale gibt. Also die deutsche Fassung von *Etüden im Schnee* würde ich auch als Original bezeichnen"[18] (Weissmann 2018, italics in the original). Self-translating into German turned out to be extremely time-consuming: „die Arbeit war [. . .] so mühsam – also aus dem Japanischen ins Deutsche selber zu übersetzen –, dass ich mir gesagt habe: Das mache ich nie wieder!"[19] (ibid.). For this reason Yoko Tawada has not translated any more of her works into German (the task has been entrusted to translator Peter Pörtner) and more often translates her German texts into Japanese.

Tawada translated the short prose work *Opium für Ovid* (Tawada 2000, lit. "Opium for Ovid") "very faithfully, so faithfully that the Japanese translation is again very difficult to understand" („sehr originalgetreu, so originalgetreu, dass die japanische Übersetzung wiederum sehr schwer zu verstehen ist") (Weissmann 2018), meaning that the language or writing style of her Japanese self-translation *Henshin no tame no*

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17 "It is much more difficult than the other way around. Because in Japanese, I write very – how should I say this? 'Free' is wrong, but – lawless and wild, and that doesn't fit at all. I can't squeeze that into German grammar afterwards. But that's what I did then. At first it was very difficult, and I thought I had to rewrite it completely. But you can't rewrite it either [. . .]. And so I went back to the faithful translation, and that was impossible too. And so I came back to freedom, and so I went back and forth several times."

18 "With *Etüden im Schnee*, I would say that there are two originals. So I would also call original the German version of *Etüden im Schnee*."

19 "the work was [. . .] so tedious – self-translating from Japanese into German – that I said to myself: I'll never do that again!"

opiumu (Tawada 2001, lit. "Opium for Transfiguration") differs decisively from the Japanese she uses when she writes (or translates) more "freely". This is a deliberate stylistic intention that enables the writer to experiment with her literary language and thereby gain new creative impulses.

Tawada behaved differently in the translation of the play *Wie der Wind im Ei* (Tawada 1997c, lit. "Like the Wind in the Egg"), which she wrote as a short story – i.e. as a prose text – in the Japanese version *Museiran* (Tawada 1996c, lit. "The Unfertilised Egg"). The fact that Tawada made major changes in this self-translation and even opted for a different genre is no exception. She also conceived the text *Die Orangerie* (Tawada 1997a, lit. "The Orangery") in different forms in the two languages: after writing the German version as a poem, she wrote the Japanese translation *Orenjien nite* (Tawada 1998b, lit. "At the Orangery") as prose. The German text *Im Bauch des Gotthards* (Tawada 1996a, lit. "In the Belly of the Gotthard") is designed as a short travel essay, while the Japanese version *Gottoharuto tetsudō* (Tawada 1996b, lit. "Gotthard Railroad") became a longer narrative.

Because of these essential differences, the term "partner texts" is often used in relation to Tawada's self-translations instead of the conventional expressions "original" and "translation" (i.a. Rigault 2017; Russo 2022). This is to emphasise that Tawada's self-translations into Japanese are fundamentally different versions of an original idea, which has then been materialised on paper in different languages. Miho Matsunaga, who introduced the term *Partnertexte* ("partner texts") to describe these works – which have basically the same content but differ sometimes significantly in terms of form – notes that the Japanese versions are usually longer and contain more characters (Matsunaga 2002, 540), except in the case of *Spiegelbild* (Tawada 1997b, lit. "Mirror Image") / *Kyôzô* (Tawada 1998a, lit. "Reflections") where the "partner texts" are similar in content and form. A detailed comparison between Tawada's "partner texts" – especially in terms of how puns were translated – has been made by Miho Matsunaga (Matsunaga 2002) as well as by Julia Genz and Kayo Adachi-Rabe (Genz and Adachi-Rabe 2014), who compared in particular the two versions of *Im Bauch des Gotthards*, *Orangerie* and *Spiegelbild*.

Another aspect worth mentioning in Yoko Tawada's work which has been attributed to self-translation processes is the interplay between Latin and Chinese characters. The Japanese script consists of two characters: the Chinese ideograms, which do not mark the pronunciation of a word, and the Japanese syllabic script. The Chinese writing system particularly, the ideograms of which contain information about the meaning of a word that is not marked in pronunciation and is lost by writing in alphabetic script, is deconstructed by Tawada and translated insofar as a translation process takes place between the spoken and the written level. The transcription into Latin

script also gives rise to homonymies, which Tawada takes up and uses creatively (for a detailed analysis see Genz 2010). The fact that ideograms exert a significant influence on Tawada's writing has been addressed by the author herself. She claimed that even when writing in German, logographic writing remains present in her texts in the broadest sense, because from her point of view the German morphological elements contain some sort of ideographic character:

> Selbst wenn ich auf Deutsch schreibe, bleibt die Bilderschrift im weitesten Sinne in meinen Texten anwesend [. . .], die Bausteine der deutschen Wörter enthalten für mich einen ideographischen Charakter, der für mein Schreiben elementar zu sein scheint.[20] (Tawada 2008, 88)

This ideographic character of the words, which the author bears in mind when writing (in Japanese as well as in German), and the corresponding transfer into written language, is understood by Tawada as a special form of self-translation, specifically as a concept she called "Übersetzung aus der Idee" ("translation from the idea"):

> Normalerweise bezeichnen wir den entstandenen, geschriebenen Text als Original, aber es gibt ja noch ein Vorher, bevor dieser Text so endgültig auf dem Papier steht. Und wenn man schon in dem Moment, wo man schreibt, richtig ausformuliert, ist das wie eine Übersetzung aus der Idee. – Die eigene Idee übersetzt man in die richtige Sprache. Insofern ist das ja kein Original, was auf dem Papier steht. Und die Idee ist bei mir die Übersetzung von den Bildern, die davor sind, und deshalb auch kein Original. [. . .] Also, es gibt kein Original![21] (Kloepfer 1998, 14–15)

According to the author, the moment before the text is composed, the process of bringing an idea, or a mental image, into the written form can already be considered a form of translation process: in this sense, the text written first is not an "original", but it is already the result of self-translation.

Interestingly, Tawada emphasises that when "translating from the idea", i.e. from one (thought) language into another (written) language, she is only slightly concerned with the semantics of a word, but rather with its form and sound (Tawada 1998c, 36). This is a crucial difference to other self-translators, for whom the focus is mainly on translating the content of a text into another language. Tawada focuses on the proper-

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20 "Even when I write in German, pictographic writing in the broadest sense remains present in my texts [. . .], the building blocks of German words contain for me an ideographic character that seems to be elemental to my writing."

21 "Normally, we call the resulting written text the original, but there is still a 'before' before this text is finally on paper. And if you already formulate correctly at the moment when you write, it is like a translation from the idea. - You translate your own idea into the right language. In this respect, what is written on paper is not an original. And with me, the idea is the translation of the images that precede it, and therefore not an original. [. . .] So, there is no original!"

ties of the writing systems involved instead. She is interested in the play with images, in homonymies, but also in associations that arise from the sound of a word, which is the immediate 'surface' of the language. In this regard, the author commented that this "surface translation" is important to her, meaning that she has always been interested in the sound of literature, which can be seen as the 'surface' of the text compared to its content:

> Mir war bis vor Kurzem nicht klar, dass diese Oberflächenübersetzung so wichtig ist für mich, bzw. dass vieles, was ich gemacht habe, mit diesem Begriff zu tun hat. Ich habe mich immer sehr für den Klang der Literatur interessiert oder die Buchstaben. Und das sind mehr oder weniger die Oberflächen des Textes im Vergleich zu dem Inhalt. [. . .] Ohne diese Oberfläche ist eine poetische Sprache nicht möglich. Daher ist es logisch, dass ich mich für die Oberfläche interessiere.[22] (Weissmann 2018)

To sum up, Tawada's concept of self-translation varies substantially depending on the self-translated work. Her translations of *Etüden im Schnee* (into German) and *Opium für Ovid* (into Japanese) fall into the category of self-translation in a narrower sense and basically correspond to more literal definitions of the phenomenon, since there is an original, published work that has been translated into another language by the author herself. Other texts, including *Die Orangerie* and *Im Bauch des Gotthards*, deviate from the respective translation into Japanese to such an extent that the works can be understood as "partner texts", but still: there is a German "original" and a strongly rewritten Japanese version. Finally, a more abstract level can be identified, specifically the "translation from the idea", which is linked to the interaction between Chinese ideograms, Japanese syllabic script and Latin characters that takes place in the author's mind. In this case, self-translation is to be understood as a mental process, which corresponds to a metaphorical extension of the concept.

4. Short concluding remarks

This article shows that the phenomenon of self-translation in contemporary German-language literature can be conceived in different ways, along a continuum ranging from more literal understandings to metaphorical interpretations of the term. As Weigel noted, most theoretical approaches emphasise just one of these two aspects, although in fact "both meanings cannot be separated, for an author who translates his or her own text into another language is necessarily personally involved in a translational process"

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22 "I didn't realize until recently that this surface translation was so important to me, or that a lot of what I did had to do with this concept. I've always been very interested in the sound of literature, or the letters. And those are more or less the surfaces of the text compared to the content. [. . .] Without this surface, poetic language is not possible. So it's logical that I'm interested in the surface."

(Weigel 2018, 21). Indeed some authors eschew rigid categories: Vladimir Vertlib, for example, wrote his first two books starting from a basis provided by his Russian diaries, and can therefore be located somewhere in between those who, on the one hand, self-translated texts which had already been published, and those who, on the other hand, consider the very fact of writing in a second or third language as a form of self-translation. Other authors, as the case of Yoko Tawada has shown, fall into different scenarios instead, depending on what their aesthetic intention is for a specific work. In this regard, it should be emphasised that not only the categories set by scholars should be taken into consideration, but also the way the authors themselves understand their multilingual writing and how they position themselves with respect to self-translation. For instance, considering Tawada's "translation from the idea" as a form of self-translation might seem too extreme an extension of the concept, although we cannot ignore the fact that the author herself describes her writing process in these terms.

At this point, however, it should be noted that not all multilingual authors consider their translingual writing to be mental self-translation. For instance, German author of Bosnian origin Saša Stanišić (b. 1978) has emphasised in more than one interview that he writes directly in German without any mental translation process taking place, since he – at least consciously – never thinks originally in his "first mother tongue" (Serbo-Croatian) but in German: „weil ich nie original in meiner ersten Muttersprache denke, sondern ich denke natürlich schon auf Deutsch. Das heißt, es gibt gar keine Übertragungsleistung, die scheitert, weil gar keine Übertragung stattfindet. Es ist immer original Deutsch"[23] (Stanišić 2019). Interestingly, Stanišić considers German a sort of "second mother tongue", as we can also deduce from another interview where the author states: „Dass ich zwei quasi Muttersprachen habe, nutzt also ein wenig und stört nie"[24] (Siller 2020, 346).

Austrian author of Bulgarian origin Dimitré Dinev (b. 1968) has also expressed rather reserved views in this respect. Dinev wrote his debut texts in his first language, Bulgarian, and did not translate them into German himself because Bulgarian and German are "two parallel worlds" in which the possibilities of expression vary significantly:

> Ich habe keine einzige Geschichte von damals ins Deutsche übersetzt. Das sind für mich zwei Parallelwelten, zwei Sprachen, in denen die Möglichkeiten sich auszudrücken sehr unterschiedlich sind. [. . .] Außer-

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23 "because I never think originally in my first mother tongue, but of course I already think in German. This means that there is no transmission performance failing, because there is no transmission at all. It is always original German."

24 "So, the fact that I have two mother tongues, so to speak, is of some use and never disturbs".

dem kann ich meine Sachen nicht selbst übersetzen. Es dauert zu lange und ist viel zu langweilig, denn es passiert nichts Neues.[25] (Dinev 2017, 41)

In conclusion, self-translation in German-language contemporary literature can take different forms. When starting from a written text (i.e. without considering mental translation processes), translating in the narrower sense and rewriting are not always clearly delineated activities, but often merge into one another. At the same time, broader conceptions of self-translation should be considered valid too. In any case it should be remembered that self-translation fits, more generally, in the personal writing aesthetics of an author, and is therefore one of the tools of their creative action.

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25 "I have not translated a single story from that time into German. For me, these are two parallel worlds, two languages in which the possibilities of expressing oneself are very different. [. . .] Besides, I can't translate my own stuff. It takes too long and is much too boring, because nothing new happens."

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Viimases, kolmandas osas keskendutakse jaapani päritolu saksa kirjanikule Yoko Tawadale, kelle teosed esindavad enesetõlke mõistmise eri võimalusi.

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