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Lingua e Traduzione – Lingua Inglese

## **MEDIATING CULTURES**

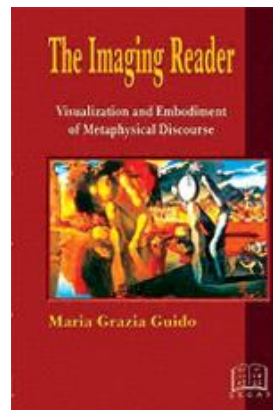
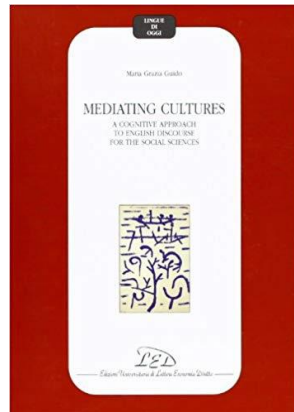
**Dispensa** per il II anno, corso di Laurea Triennale

### **Onomatopoeic Translation**

Textbook: © Maria Grazia Guido, *Mediating Cultures: a Cognitive Approach to English Discourse for the Social Sciences*. 2004. Milano: LED.

Texts from:

© M.G. Guido (2005) *The Imaging Reader: Visualization and Embodiment of Metaphysical Discourse*. New York/Ottawa/Toronto: Legas Publishing.



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### 'Tactile imagination'

"She asked: 'What makes you so nuts about rabbits?'

Lennie had to think carefully before he could come to a conclusion. He moved cautiously close to her, until he was right against her. 'I like to pet nice things. Once at a fair I seen some of them long-hair rabbits. An' they was nice, you bet. Sometimes I've even pet mice, but not when I could get nothing better.'

Curley's wife moved away from him a little. 'I think you're nuts', she said.

'No, I ain't,' Lennie explained earnestly. 'George says I ain't. I like to pet nice things with my fingers, sof' things.'

She was a little bit reassured. 'Well, who don't?' she said. 'Ever'body likes that. I like to feel silk an' velvet. Do you like to feel velvet?'

Lennie chuckled with pleasure. 'You bet, by God,' he cried happily. [...]

Curley's wife laughed at him. 'You're nuts,' she said. 'But you're a kinds nice fella. Jus' like a big baby. But a person can see kinda what you mean. When I'm doin' my hair sometime I jus' set an' stroke it 'cause it's so soft.' To show how she did it, she ran her fingers over the top of her head. 'Some people get kinda coarse hair,' she said complacently. 'Take Curley. His hair is jus' like wire. But mine is soft and fine. 'Course I brush it a lot. That makes it fine. Here - feel right here.' She took Lennie's hand and put it on her head. 'Feel right aroun' there an' see how soft it is.'

Lennie's big fingers fell to stroking her hair."

(John Steinbeck, from *Of Mice and Men*)

Compare the sound analogies of these two texts: the original one and its translation into Italian (based on an adaptation of Cesare Pavese's translation of Steinbeck's novel - *Uomini e Topi*). The key-sounds are in bold-type; the recurring supporting sounds are underlined:

#### A) English version:

"Lennie had to think carefully before he could come to a conclusion. He moved cautiously /kɔːʃəsli/ close to her, until he was right against her /f/k/, /r/ and /s/ are the same sounds of the word 'caress'. 'I like to pet nice /s/ things /θɪŋz/. Once at a fair I seen some of them long-hair rabbits. An' they was nice, you bet. Sometimes I've even pet mice, but not when I could get nothing better. ... I like to pet nice things with my fingers, sof' things.' She was a little bit reassured. /f/s/ -/rɪəʃə:d/ 'I like to feel silk an' velvet. Do you like to feel velvet?'"

#### B) Italian version:

"Lennie dovette pensare accuratamente prima di giungere ad una conclusione. Si mosse con cautela un altro poco verso di lei, finchè non le fu quasi addosso. 'Mi piace carezzare le belle cose. Una volta ho visto alla fiera dei conigli dal pejo lungo. Erano così belli, vi dico. Qualche volta ho carezzato anche i topi, ma solo quando non trovavo altro. ... Mi piace toccare con le dita le belle cose, le cose soffici.' La ragazza si mostrò un poco rassicurata. '... A me piace toccare la seta e il velluto. Vi piace toccare il velluto?'"

### 'Olfactory imagination'

"He was just about to leave this dreary exhibition and head homewards along the gallery of the Louvre when the wind brought him something, a tiny, hardly noticeable something, a crumb, an atom of scent; no, even less than that: it was more the premonition of a scent than the scent itself - and at the same time it was definitely a premonition of something he had never smelled before. He backed up against the wall, closed his eyes and flared his nostrils. [...]

This scent had a freshness, but not the freshness of limes or pomegranates, nor the freshness of myrrh or cinnamon bark or curly mint or birch or camphor or pine needles, nor that of a May rain or a frosty wind or of well water [...] and at the same time it had warmth, but not as bergamot, cypress or musk has, or jasmine or narcissi, not as rosewood has or iris [...] This scent was a blend of both, of evanescence and substance, not a blend, but a unity, although slight and frail as well, and yet solid and sustaining, like a piece of thin, shimmering silk [...] and yet again not like silk, but like pastry soaked in honey-sweet milk - and try as he would he couldn't fit those together: milk and silk! This scent was inconceivable, indescribable, could not be categorized in any way - it really ought not to exist at all. And yet there it was as plain and splendid as day"

(Patrick Suskind, from *Perfume*. Translated by John E. Woods)

#### A) English version:

"This scent had a freshness, but not the freshness of limes or /b/ pomegranates, nor the freshness of myrrh /ə/ or cinnamon bark /a:/ or curly mint or birch /ə/ or camphor or pine needles, nor that of a May rain or a frosty wind or of well water..."



**B) Italian version:**

"Quell'odore aveva in sé una freschezza: ma non la freschezza dei limoncelli o delle arance amare, non la freschezza della mirra o della scorza di cannella o della menta verde o delle betulle o della canfora o degli aghi di pino, non quella della pioggia di maggio o del vento gelido o dell'acqua di fonte ..." [addition of a /g/-sound apparently inconsistent with the idea of an odour mainly conveyed by the /fr/ and /sk/ /ts/ clusters] (Translation by G. Agabio)

**C) German original version:**

"Dieser Geruch hatte Frische; aber nicht die Frische der Limetten oder Pomeranzen, nicht die Frische von Myrrhe oder Zimtblatt oder Krauseminze oder Birken oder Kampfer oder Kiefernadeln, nicht von Mairegen oder Frostwind oder von Quellwasser ..."

**'Gustatory imagination'**

"Something strange was happening to Gertrudis. On her the food seemed to act as an aphrodisiac: she began to feel an intense heat pulsing through her limbs. An itch in the centre of her body kept her from sitting properly in her chair. [...] She got out her handkerchief and tried to wipe these sinful thoughts from her mind as she wiped away the sweat. But it was no use, something strange had happened to her. She turned to Tita for help, but Tita wasn't there, even though her body was sitting up quite properly in her chair; there wasn't the slightest sign of life in her eyes. It was as if a strange alchemical process had dissolved her entire being in the rose petal sauce, in the tender flesh of the quails, in the wine, in every one of the meal's aromas. That was the way she entered Pedro's body, hot, voluptuous, totally sensuous. With that meal it seemed they had discovered a new system of communication, in which Tita was the transmitter, Pedro the receiver, and poor Gertrudis the medium, the conducting body through which the singular message was passed."

(Laura Esquivel, from *Like Water for Chocolate*. Translated by Carol and Thomas Christensen)

**A) English version:**

"It was as if a strange alchemical process had dissolved her entire being in the rose petal sauce, in the tender flesh of the quails, in the wine, in every one of the meal's aromas."

**B) Italian version:**

"Pareva che per uno strano fenomeno di alchimia il suo essere si fosse dissolto nella salsa di rose, nella carne delle quaglie, nel vino e in ogni aroma di quel cibo."

**C) Spanish original version:**

"Tal parecía que en un extraño fenómeno de alquimia su ser se había disuelto en la salsa de las rosas, en el cuerpo de las codornices, en el vino y en cada uno de los olores de la comida."

**'Auditory imagination'**

*The following passage is an extract from Peter Shaffer's play Amadeus (based on Salieri's envious obsession for Mozart's music). This passage reproduces the experience of the sense of hearing through words by resorting to the auditory imagination. Could you please supply a translation of this passage into Italian, trying to reproduce (and then justify) the sound pattern and its effects that you have experienced in reading the original English version?*

"SALIERI: 'And then, right away, the concert began. [...] It started simply enough: just a pulse in the lowest registers - bassoons and basset horns - like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then suddenly, high above it, sounded a single note on the oboe. It hung there unwavering - piercing me through - till breath could hold it no longer, and a clarinet withdrew it out of me, and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight it had me trembling. The light flickered in the room. My eyes clouded! The squeezebox groaned louder, and over it the higher instruments wailed and warbled, throwing lines of sound around me - long lines of pain around and through me - Ah, the pain! Pain as I had never known it. I called up to my sharp old God 'What is this? ... What?!' But the squeezebox went on and on, and the pain cut deeper into my shaking head until suddenly I was running - dashing through the side-door, stumbling downstairs into the street, into the cold night, gasping for life. 'What?! What is this? Tell me, Signore! What is this pain? What is this need in the sound? Forever unfulfillable yet fulfilling him who hears it, utterly. Is it Your need? Can it be Yours? ...' Dimly the music sounded from the salon above. Dimly the stars shone on the empty street. I was suddenly frightened. It seemed to me I had heard the voice of God."

(Peter Shaffer, from *Amadeus*)