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Literature and Translation

Inclusion, Diversity and Innovation in Translation Education

Edited by

**Alejandro Bolaños García-Escribano
and Mazal Oaknín**

Foreword by

Olga Castro

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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	ix
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>List of contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Foreword by Olga Castro</i>	xvii
<i>Preface</i>	xxi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxiii
1 Introduction: why inclusion, diversity and innovation matters in translation education <i>Alejandro Bolaños García-Escribano and Mazal Oaknín</i>	1
Part I: New technologies	
2 Translating the unknown: a case study on the usefulness of machine translation in comparative literature research <i>Sergio Portelli</i>	19
3 Learning foreign languages through telecollaboration: embedding didactic audiovisual translation in the language classroom <i>Alejandro Bolaños García-Escribano and Beatriz Cerezo Merchán</i>	37
4 Teaching languages for social and cooperation purposes: using didactic media accessibility in foreign language education <i>María del Mar Ogea Pozo and Noa Talaván</i>	69
Part II: Transmedia	
5 Synergising literature and film in the French literary translation classroom: a focus on gender equality <i>Soledad Díaz Alarcón</i>	95

6	Transmediation: pedagogical applications of film adaptation in modern foreign language education <i>Carmen Herrero and Isabelle Vanderschelden</i>	121
Part III: Cross-disciplinary intersections		
7	Translation as queer practice: (de)gendering feminist language in the poetry of Xi Xi and Zhai Yongming <i>Xiaofan Amy Li</i>	157
8	Translating intersectional feminism: a ‘modern’ language classroom <i>Mazal Oaknín</i>	177
9	Queer challenges and affordances of literary translation in the foreign language classroom <i>John Gray</i>	199
10	Final reflections: why I am still talking to white people about race <i>Haydn Kirnon</i>	221
	<i>Index</i>	235

6

Transmediation: pedagogical applications of film adaptation in modern foreign language education

Carmen Herrero
Isabelle Vanderschelden

Introduction

With the rapid development of ‘convergence’ culture (Jenkins 2006, 2), increased opportunities to work within the sector of intersemiotic translation have emerged. In the 1950s Roman Jakobson (1959, 233) identified different ways of transferring verbal signs through intersemiotic translation, defining said transfer as ‘into another, nonverbal system of symbols’. Other types of adaptation and expansion have also been developed as educational tools in modern foreign language curricula. However, there remains a paucity of work that has critically explored the potential of transmediation as an effective approach to translation practice and training through a wider lens than purely linguistic transfer. This chapter presents how transmediation can enhance translation practices in the language classroom. It argues that the study of adaptation and transmedia storytelling allows (language) students to better understand how multimodal texts are interlinked in different ways of recycling stories. Working with different modes of transmediation implies recognising the multiple points of entry into literary and cultural translation processes. It is also an effective method for reflecting critically on the ways in which literary adaptation finds its place in language education through innovative exercises structured around transmediality.

The first part of the chapter briefly revisits concepts derived from traditional translation theory, such as intersemiotic translation and transmutation (Jakobson 1959) and the notion of an *invariant* core in

translation (Bassnett 2002; Malmkjær 2011; Robin 2016). These help to redefine the notion of universals of translation to account for practices of transmediation, such as intermediality, adaptation and transmedia storytelling. In addition, it presents a critical model for media analysis structured around the concept of multimodality, developed in the twenty-first century for the social sciences (Cope and Kalantzis 2000). As we will show, this interdisciplinary model constitutes a useful toolkit for film analysis but also for the other types of texts and communication practices – including adaptation and translation – that learners encounter in the real world.

The second part presents possible applications of our pedagogical model, which promotes an interdisciplinary approach (intermedial, transmedia and translation studies) for discussing and critically evaluating the intersemiotic and transmedia translation of media and literary texts. It comments upon some strategies of adaptation and transmedia extension, as well as the processes involved in intersemiotic translation that could be explored pedagogically in language classes. This chapter makes use of two examples: one French and one Spanish. The first case study is a transnational and multilingual French animation film, *Josep* (Aurel 2020b), based on the biography of the artist Josep Bartoli and his published drawings retracing the detention camps in France for refugees during the Spanish civil war. The second case study is a graphic novel (Rey 2016) and a film (Zambrano 2019), both based on the Spanish novel *Intemperie* (2013) (translated into English as *Out in the Open* in 2016) by Jesús Carrasco.¹

These works lend themselves to a comparative analysis focusing on transmediation, hereby understood as the processes involved in the translation of meaning from one mode (written text or a visual image) to multiple modes (a film or a graphic novel). Both case studies show how, through this new prism, the discussion of adaptation practices can form the basis of language exercises that enhance learners' translation skills in a broader sense. The framework we propose is represented via four tables (see Tables 6.1 to 6.4) that can be used and adapted as worksheets. They are designed to help teachers to engage their students with the critical analysis of the processes and strategies involved in intermedial adaptation, cross-media and trans-genre storytelling and narrative expansion. The materials can be easily adapted and tailored to other contemporary multimodal texts and cross-media extensions for use in secondary and higher education.

Revisiting translation theory

The invariant core in translation

Two areas within translation studies – the invariant core and universals of translation – are used to contextualise our claim that analysing intersemiotic and transmediation adaptation processes can help to develop critical analysis in modern language teaching and engage learners with innovative pedagogical applications of transmedia practice adapted to the new media of the twenty-first century. In translation studies, the invariant core refers to the elements that remain unchanged in the process of translation. Identifying an invariant core presupposes a comparative approach before and after translation (or adaptation) of texts, even though, from the 1990s onwards, descriptive approaches in translation studies based on empirical research focused on ‘the transfer operations and the shifts that occur as a result of translators’ decisions’ (Toury 1995, 31). The notion of an invariant core helped to identify general laws of translation known as universals of translation, which then led to establishing ‘universals of translational behaviour’ (Toury 1995, 81). The universals of translation therefore describe factors and qualities that distinguish translations from source texts; they can be defined as ‘linguistic features which typically occur in translated rather than original texts and are thought to be independent of the influence of the specific language pairs involved in the process of translation distinctive distribution of lexical items’ (Baker 1993, 243).

Putting these theoretical principles into practice, our materials extend the notion of universal features beyond the field of interlingual transition to embrace broader universal cognitive phenomena that affect intermedial and intersemiotic adaptation processes. The cognitive dimensions of this transfer process are important, for example, in the context of films that have been adapted from literary sources. Audiovisual adaptation is not just a verbal or visual process, but one that can also include the transfer of affect. The cognitive nature of choices and behaviour guiding intermedial adaptation also start from an invariant core, which can take various forms and be associated with specific modes of transfer. Clüver’s work (2007), for example, as we will see below, expands on the diachronic and synchronic dynamics of culture, which also have a place in adaptation modes in different periods and cultural contexts.

Multimodal literacy

Several scholars have acknowledged the need to account for the multiple dimensions of literacy practices and discourses in digital and non-digital contexts. In their pioneering work, the New London Group (1996, 63) coined the term ‘multiliteracies’ and proposed a new pedagogy of literacy. The prefix *multi-* refers to the ‘enormous and significant differences in contexts and patterns of communication and the “multi-“ of multimodality’ (Cope and Kalantzis 2015, 3). The multiliteracies instructional approach formulated by the New London Group includes four knowledge processes: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (Cope and Kalantzis 2009, 166). In their application to curriculum design, Kalantzis et al. (2016, 75) reframed these terms into words that students could recognise. Situated practices (*experiencing*) focus on the connections between meaning-making processes in real-world situations and educational spaces, using everyday experiences. Overt instruction (*conceptualising*) involves learners developing an explicit metalanguage to describe the concepts and their connections. Critical framing (*analysing*) entails the capacity to critically analyse text functions and to interpret the power relationships involved in communicative actions. Transformed practice (*applying*) implies that learners become creators of texts in real communicative contexts.

Multimodal forms of representation and communication have expanded due to the technological advances taking place in the current digital age. Different theoretical and analytical frameworks have been proposed to conceptualise multimodal phenomena, drawing from social semiotic theories (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) and systemic functional theories (Serafini 2014; Jewitt et al. 2016; Lim 2018). The ‘multimodal turn’ (Jewitt 2009, 4) acknowledges that multimodal texts, or ‘ensembles’, use a range of semiotic resources to represent and communicate meaning (Serafini 2014). In these theories, a *mode* is defined as ‘a set of socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning’ with ‘distinct affordances, such as colour, typography, font and frames’ (Bezemer and Jewitt 2018, 291), and the term *semiotic resource* refers to the linguistic, visual and cultural tools that are capable of representing and communicating meaning (Kress 2003). In addition to written language, other multimodal resources available are music, still images (painting, photography, drawing) and moving images (video, film). After all, as Kress (2003, 48) notes, the spread of digital technologies has given more importance to the ‘logic of the screen’.

Shifts in communication practices require learners to acquire new skills to decode, interpret and create meaning with multimodal texts in different sociocultural contexts (Lankshear and Knobel 2003). As Lim (2018, 2) remarks, multimodal literacy 'is about understanding the affordances, that is the potentials and limitations, of the different meaning-making resources, as well as how they work together to produce a coherent and cohesive multimodal text'. Moreover, a 'critical multimodal curriculum framework' should engage with the 'range of artistic and design elements used across multimodal texts' and involve comparing multimodal texts through different strategies across social contexts and cultural practices (Serafini 2023, 27).

Intermediality and transmediality

In recent years, with the advent of the new media age, intersemiotic translation has been seen as a 'bridge concept between translation, adaptation, and by default semiotics' (Giannakopoulou 2019, 201). This has opened new theoretical discussions within translation studies that call for interdisciplinary research on the transmedia adaptation praxis. As the expansion of digital media opens up new artistic and cultural practices, intermediality and transmedia have become key concepts in cross-disciplinary academic research on cultural and commercial practices; they are central to the pedagogical applications that we propose.

Intermediality is used 'to describe a huge range of cultural phenomena which involve more than one medium' (Rippl 2015, 1), including different types of cultural creations, such as literature, art and media. Since the turn of the century, intermedial studies have tried to comprehend the various aspects of the 'intermedial turn' across comparative literature, media, film, cultural and communication studies (Wolf 2011, 2). Bruhn and Schirmmacher (2022, 6) claim that intermedial studies are the best way to describe, study and compare different media products: analysing 'translations and transformations that exist not between languages but between different media types', investigating the way some elements of the narrative are altered in film adaptations or comparing multimodal communication in different media products in order to understand 'how medial choices shape, form and support what is communicated'.

Looking at the specificities of different intermedial articulations, Rajewsky (2005, 46–51) proposes three subcategories of intermediality that can support the analysis of texts and media products:

1. Intermediality as ‘medial transposition’ (such as film adaptations and novelisations) refers to the ‘transformation of a given media product (such as literature and film) or of its substratum into another medium’ (Rajewsky 2005, 51).
2. Intermediality as ‘media combination’ includes opera, theatre and comics.
3. Intermediality as ‘intermedial references’ describes how a given media product is the result of imitation and transposition techniques across media.

Clüver (2007) also argues that adaptation is a form of transformation that may involve intersemiotic transposition. Transmediation thus describes the repeated mediation of equivalent sensory configurations by another technical medium (Elleström 2019, 4–5). This broadens the notion of intermedial transformation processes to account for new combinations of media transformations now taking place in media cultures, and this broader conceptualisation can be applied in the language classroom to expand the use and creation of multimodal texts.

Against this backdrop of participatory creative and knowledge cultures, transmedia studies have gained scholarly relevance since the turn of the century (Freeman and Gambarato 2019). As introduced by Kinder (1991), transmedia refers to the intertextual processes present in films, animation, TV series and toys. Jenkins (2003) thereafter coined the term ‘transmedia storytelling’, which he defines as a process where fictional elements get dispersed to create a new unified entertainment experience. Transmedia storytelling involves narrating stories across the media spectrum (films and television series, social media, literature, websites, fan videos and video games), thereby benefiting from the affordances provided by each media channel or platform. This offers creative opportunities in four areas: backstory, mapping the world, displaying other characters’ perspectives on the action and expanding audience engagement (Jenkins 2011). Transmedia storytelling has been successfully exploited by popular existing franchises such as *Harry Potter*.

Transmedia scholars and practitioners tend to disagree on the relationship between adaptation and transmedia storytelling. For some (Jenkins 2011; Scolari 2013; Pratten 2015), adaptations are not part of the transmedia phenomenon, as they are not shared across multiple media platforms, are redundant (story retelling) and lack co-creativity. On this, Long (2007, 22) considers that ‘retelling a story in a different medi[um] is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*’. For others (Baetens and Sánchez-Mesa Martínez

2015; Elleström 2019), adaptation is part of the transmedia process. We support Dena's (2019, 204) argument that transmedia adaptations and extensions could be exploited further to engage students creatively with popular products.

Pedagogical applications of transmedia in language education

Intermediality is at the centre of common adaptation practices to translate stories and other artistic productions into films. In the context of cinema production in French and Spanish, it has taken many forms, from the adaptation of classic texts (plays, novels, stories, *bandes dessinées*) to more derivative self-standing works (*pastiche* and parody). Transmediation, as discussed by Elleström (2019, 2), takes place both diachronically and synchronically and reveals an invariant core derived from a source text, consisting of the common formal, narrative and linguistic elements retained from the source in film adaptations (broadly assimilated to target texts).

Transmediation provides a model for using multiple sign systems and semiosis experiences in language curricula. The notion of transmediation, 'which remains vital to understanding multimodalities' (Siegel 2006, 68), is particularly significant when developing a curriculum that does not privilege written and oral language over all other sign systems, thereby considering the multimodality inherently appearing in all texts and semiotic adaptations. The teaching materials that we present here for French- and Spanish-language classes follow a clear pedagogical rationale and showcase multimodal and transmedia practices (Herrero and Vanderschelden 2019; Herrero 2021; Herrero 2022; Herrero and Vanderschelden 2023; Herrero et al. 2023; see also www.transmediaineducation.com). In terms of linguistic content, the materials are designed to enhance the four key language skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) using authentic visual and audiovisual sources. On the lexical level, they will expand students' critical metalanguage and specialist vocabulary in the foreign language on a range of topics (for instance character analysis, film language and critical terminology). They can be used for autonomous learning but are also designed to promote active participation with peers in collaborative tasks. Embracing sociocultural content, the learners are encouraged to communicate, transmit knowledge to their peers, express and value different opinions through discussions and engage actively in project planning and the distribution of tasks. They may also be asked to provide peer evaluation with a view to developing their constructive critical skills.

Building on new media literacies (Jenkins et al. 2009; Scolari 2018), the activities are also designed to help learners increase their understanding of film and visual artefacts as effective modes of communication. Some of the exercises are tailored to encourage learners to carry out their own multimedia projects around the materials proposed using creativity, digital resources and editing skills. For example, this may include the ability to think and respond creatively to a given multimedial input with an audiovisual translation project (Herrero et al. 2020) or to participate in a transmedia project (video essay, book trailer, digital review) (Herrero 2019).

We have designed four thematic tables – reproduced in Tables 6.1 to 6.4 – that can be used as worksheets and templates to provide a structured visual representation of intermedial analysis and critical thinking tasks. These tables can easily be adapted and tailored to different needs and pedagogical objectives. The sample analyses provided as guidance in Tables 6.5 and 6.6 are merely illustrations to guide teachers or independent learners if needed. We also provide indicative elements of critical analysis using the multimodal and transmedia principles established in the previous sections to encourage teachers to develop their own exercises. Table 6.1 places the emphasis on modes of meaning in multimodal theory of representation and communication.

In Table 6.2, we offer guidance on how to plan the critical analysis of a scene, extract or other multimedia artefact.

Table 6.3 will allow students to name the transfer processes which take place between the original text and the adaptation and transmedia extensions.

Table 6.4 provides a grid template for assessing learners' skills. It can help students to get a deeper understanding of the steps in the learning and creative strategies involved in the process of transmediation (cross-media and trans-genre storytelling and narrative expansions).

In the following section we present two case studies which can aid language teachers of French and Spanish to apply the pedagogical tables to the study of transmedia processes. We also offer information and brief indicative analytical comments that will help teachers to prepare their classes and adapt the materials to their needs. The examples from the case studies also show how our pedagogical approach facilitates the critical reading of texts and provides new opportunities to engage students in the critical reading of classical and modern literary texts and the transmission of history across different cultures.

	Relevant examples from the film studied Provide examples of how each mode is used in individual scenes, segments of the text studied (clip, graphic novel, film, animation).	Meaning and effect produced Critically analyse what effects the examples have on the audience.
Written mode Use of written text or subtitles		
Visual mode Use of still or moving images		
Visual style Colour and lighting		
Spatial meaning Indoor or outdoor location design (architecture, streetscapes, cityscapes and landscapes)		
Proxemic mode Positioning of characters (interpersonal distance, interactions)		
Gestural mode Body language, gestures, way of walking, costume, hairstyle		
Audio mode Music, sound and diegetic noises		
Linguistic mode Dialogue, monologue, speech, voice-over		

Table 6.1 Modes of meaning in multimodal theory of representation and communication (adapted from Kalantzis et al. 2016, 232)

Aspects to analyse	Relevant examples from the film or extract studied (how each element is used in scenes or extracts)
<p>How to describe images</p> <p>Frame Type of shot Camera angles Composition</p>	
<p>How to discuss <i>mise en scène</i> [visual]</p> <p>Actors' positioning Costumes and accessories Use of space Location Light, colour, perspective Montage</p>	
<p>How to discuss <i>mise en scène</i> (sound)</p> <p>What are the main features of the dialogue? Is there a musical soundtrack? Are there sound effects?</p>	
<p>How is meaning created out of all the <i>mise en scène</i> elements? (emotions and sensory perceptions)</p>	
<p>What are the effects produced on audiences by the different <i>mise en scène</i> strategies deployed?</p>	
<p>Critical thinking activity: Build a solid argument and provide illustrations of your points using one of the aspects of the scene which you have identified above.</p>	

Table 6.2 Planning the critical analysis of a scene or extract

Transfer process	From the original text to the graphic novel or film studied
<p>Narrative and structure Features retained and changed in plot, storytelling chronology, characters, genre</p>	
<p>Visual style Colour, typography, visual texture, shape, form, space</p>	
<p>Aural mode Music, sound effects, silence, sound and spoken language (volume, tone of voice, accent), ambient noises</p>	
<p>Artistic features Art and visual references</p>	
<p>Communication priorities Relevant features and elements that are prioritised in the transfer of the story</p>	
<p>Target audience and language level</p>	

Table 6.3 Transfer processes between two artefacts in the process of transmediation

	Aware	Familiar	Skilled	Expert
Visual literacy Ability to analyse and create images competently				
Multimodal literacy Ability to analyse, compare and create multimodal texts competently				
Transmedia literacy Ability to understand communication and articulation across multiple media Ability to create and consume multiple media				
Critical thinking skills Ability to argue, question, deduce and generate intelligent and convincing criticism				
Digital skills Ability to use digital tools to create artefacts				

Table 6.4 Grid to assess students' visual, multimodal and transmedia literacy and critical thinking and digital literacy skills

Case study 1: Josep – exploring transmediation in film animation

This case study focuses on the transmediation process from several pictorial sources to an animated video format designed for cinema. The animation film *Josep* (Aurel 2020b) is an experimental form of adaptation of the artist Josep Bartoli's (1910–1995) life.² He was a republican Catalan and an international artist who was exiled from Spain in 1939. The telling of his life story can be categorised as a media crossover and a point of translation transfer – and, more importantly, as the blending (and unification) of different forms of visual media to create another work of art. This type of transmedia adaptation process is unusual. The sources used include drawings and artworks as well as published biographical notes.

Josep (74 minutes) was produced with a budget of €2.7 million in 2019 and directed by Aurel, a French artist of the twenty-first century.³ Released in 2020, *Josep* is the outcome of eight years of research and (pre)production, drawing on a range of resources and collaborators. The film illustrates how experimental arthouse animation films can represent innovative transmedia artefacts – underused in language education thus far – displaying specific strategies of translation of meaning and form. This process of transmedial adaptation follows Rajewsky's (2005) taxonomy by transposing carbon drawings onto animation images, combining different media in such a way that still and animated images imitate pictorial styles, mixing trends from different established art forms and periods. The animation film is a new, independent audiovisual work achieved through a 'union/fusion' process (Clüver 2007, 26), inspired by pre-existing artwork and reinterpreting its formal properties. By adapting and transferring Bartoli's drawings and Frida Kahlo's distinctive use of colour, Aurel pays tribute to these artists. He also displays his own creative talent and expresses his own agenda by mixing graphic forms: animated drawings recalling still drawings, iconic paintings blended into animated film frames and animated (occasionally satirical) figures with the traits of real-life characters. He recycles other textual sources (biography, letters, memoirs, interviews) to produce audiovisual animation.

The film portrays Barcelona-born Josep Bartoli, who worked as a press illustrator. A militant for the Catalan Communist Party in the 1930s, he fled the Franco regime in February 1939. He was immediately interned in a French refugee camp in Argelès-sur-Mer (Pyrénées-Orientales) after crossing the Pyrenees. He was detained for several months in dreadful conditions before escaping and being arrested again on several occasions

by the authorities of Vichy France. Sent for deportation to a German concentration camp in Dachau, he jumped from the train and eventually fled to Mexico in 1943. There he became a lover of Frida Kahlo, a relationship which continued when he moved to New York in 1946. In New York, he worked as a set designer and magazine illustrator and was acquainted with artists such as Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline, under whose influence his art became more abstract. Art critics agree that his later work did not have as much impact as his early drawings.

These works, first published in *Campos de concentración (1939–194...)* (Bartoli and Molins i Fàbrega 1944) and later by his own nephew, Georges Bartoli, in *La retirada* (Bartoli and Garcia 2009), were discovered by Aurel in 2010, by chance. He felt the urge ‘to immerse’ himself ‘in this story, to take it over, digest it and then bring it back to life’ (Aurel 2020a). By rearranging and bringing together little-known biographical accounts, Aurel pays tribute to fellow graphic artist Bartoli, adding his own historical, political and artistic commentary. His film targets new audiences and transmits history and culture in a way that students will be able to discuss and evaluate from different interdisciplinary perspectives. A wide range of exercises can be designed to explore the adaptation process, which involved transmedia translation of drawings and translating words into moving images, sound and sensorial elements. For example, the tasks summarised in Tables 6.1 and 6.3 aim to enhance critical and artistic appreciation within the linguistic and cultural contexts of modern languages programmes. Table 6.5 lists possible elements which could be discussed or proposed as feedback. The next paragraph also provides a few guidelines on the film’s characters, narrative form and genre conventions to help educators prepare and tailor their sessions to their needs.

Josep draws on true events, but it also manipulates and interprets the primary sources left behind by Bartoli in several ways. Aurel’s background is journalism, hence his comments on the real world using graphic form. During preproduction, he created a storyboard following a three-stage process of intersemiotic translation. The first step was decoding (in this case, the drawings as primary source testimonies); in a second step, he transposed the primary sources’ invariant core into animated film images embracing a range of forms and media. Finally, to arrive at a more cohesive narrative form, he collaborated with an experienced screenwriter and storyteller, Jean-Louis Milesi, who developed a more fictional narrative and wrote the dialogue to complement the images: ‘He knows how to handle intergenerational relations, politics, militant action, struggles, humanity ... and humour, the politeness of despair’ (Aurel 2020a).

Bartoli's story is transmediated into a twenty-first-century animation film that brings together historical facts and a fictional narrative by introducing two fictional characters: Valentin, a clumsy but talented drawer and street artist, and his grandfather. Using flashbacks to represent the fragmented memories of the old man, a new, more distanced perspective of Bartoli's story is given, filling some of the gaps in his adventurous life to complement his drawings. The grandfather's memories, which capture Valentin's imagination, recreate the figure of an empathetic gendarme, referred to as Serge, who was instrumental to Josep's survival in France and his escape from the camp (see [Figure 6.1](#)). In the confused old man's tale, Serge was a guard working in the camp who also witnessed the post-war journeys of Bartoli in Mexico and America. When the old man gives Valentin a torn drawing by Josep, representing his friend Helios – killed in the camp, a victim of the guards' cruelty as shown in the initial scenes of the film – we do not realise that this drawing will provide a moving, symbolic narrative closure for the film. The last scene shows an older Valentin travelling to a gallery in New York where Bartoli's work is being exhibited, and finding the other half of his drawing. By reuniting the two fragments anonymously, Valentin reunites two friends from the past, making his small contribution to the collective transmission of memory.

Through animation, Aurel increases the iconicity of his images, going beyond a naturalistic treatment of history to achieve a certain allegorical universality. One type of transmedia practice exercise is to engage with the merits of animation as a mode of communication of messages and effects. *Josep* presents some graphic challenges for the



Figure 6.1 Still from *Josep* (Aurel 2020b) representing Valentin and his grandfather. © *Josep* by Aurel, reproduced with permission from Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée.

animation artist, who sets out to let Bartoli's intentions and graphic moods shine through while putting his own graphic work at the service of history and expressing his own feelings about Bartoli's art (Aurel 2020a). His transmedia adaptation work produces a personal film while serving another artist. Animation is a medium that enables a director to capture and immediately editorialise an event, to highlight a flaw, a contradiction or an injustice and make it instantly clear to the viewer (see Aurel 2020a; Batalla 2020).

Through transmedial and intersemiotic transposition Aurel appropriates some of the thematic motifs and drawing techniques that define Bartoli's artistic signature. Critics have, for example, identified artistic visual influences found in Bartoli's drawings and retained by Aurel for his film, such as horrific, Goya-like drawings of prisoners' faces ravaged by disease and hunger, contorted with despair (Clarke 2021). Aurel then transfers some of these into animated images, adding movement, sound, music, breath and rhythm to the still images. To engage with this heterogeneous process of *mise en scène* in the film (or extract), learners could use Table 6.2 to identify the different visual styles, interpret still and moving images and highlight the heterogeneous use of colour. Through this they can ascertain the symbolic significance of these aspects and the effects produced on viewers. The colour schemes strategically indicate the different periods of Josep's life by using visual contrasts: bright colours illustrate his encounter with Frida Kahlo in the 1940s and with the New York abstract school of art in the 1960s. They stand out against the sepia or monochromic tones used to characterise the conditions of detention in the camps. Similarly, the rhythm and editing of the animated images convey different moods as, often, the image remains still and the characters' expressions static, 'like memories fixed in the brain after all these years' (Clarke 2021).

Also significant in the film's genesis are the audiovisual strategies used to convey sensorial effects, including the cold and lack of basic hygiene in the camps, illnesses and hunger. Drawing on his experience as a political cartoonist, Aurel sometimes enhances the allegorical dimension of Bartoli's drawings, resorting to caricature when he portrays the cruel guards as pig faced. The inclusion of pre-existing poetic texts for the songs used in the film (Miguel Hernández's poem 'Guerra' [War] inspired the film's credit song, 'Todas las madres del mundo' [All the Mothers of the World], written and performed by Silvia Pérez Cruz) and the indirect references to Federico García Lorca's work add extra intersemiotic dimensions. These features are summarised as effects produced by multimodality in *Josep* (see Table 6.5).

Another recurring motif in the film is the act of drawing as a political statement, a testimony, an act of transmission, a creative response to horror. Frida's words to Bartoli help us to better understand the communicative power of graphic art: 'You draw caricatures because what you've seen and remember scares you. And the day you finally let colour in, you'll have tamed your fear' (Aurel 2020b). It also shows how visual elements and dialogue complement one another. *Josep's* multilingual soundtrack (Catalan, English, French, Spanish) enhances the multicultural dimension of the film and could be the base for a range of translation activities. The silences in the film are also telling, and learners could write interior dialogues, articulating the characters' thoughts in the film through the narrative device of voice-over.

In addition to its visual and verbal dimensions, the film represents diverse spatial and cultural environments and sensorial forms of expression: Valentin's character is constructed around rap music, licence plates of the Marseille and Aix en Provence region and the graffiti of Massilia (Latin for Marseille). If the audience identifies with Valentin's reactions, they will receive the intersemiotic messages transmitted by Serge and Bartoli. By returning the missing part of the drawing, Valentin also becomes a *passeur* of memory and history at the end of the film. His act symbolises the reinterpretation of the past: Serge's memories are reinterpreted by his grandson using first-hand accounts of the Spanish Civil War (Sorfa 2022).

Aurel resorts to intersemiotic resources that he recycles and adapts to communicate meaning. His film can be approached diachronically as



Figure 6.2 Shot from *Josep* (Aurel 2020b) representing the characters of Josep, Serge and Frida. © *Josep* by Aurel, reproduced with permission from Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée.

	Relevant examples from the film studied	Meaning and effect produced
<p>Written mode Use of written text and subtitles</p>	<p>Several books of memoirs and biographical information used to prepare the screenplay and lyrics (Valentin)</p>	<p>Identifies documentary value and introduces some historical facts</p>
<p>Visual mode Use of still or moving images</p>	<p>Drawings (black, pencil carbon) Photos Posters Paintings Visual representation of memories</p>	<p>Differentiate between different periods and spatial contexts of the narrative Historical documents Iconic pastiche</p>
<p>Visual style Colour Lighting</p>	<p>Use of sepia Monochrome images Pale, cold light for camps Night Use of bright colours</p>	<p>Sepia to represent memory Political cartoons of Aurel or Bartoli Visual signal of Josep's distress and sense of danger Kahlo's style or Bartoli's US work</p>
<p>Spatial meaning Indoor or outdoor location design (architecture, streetscapes, cityscapes and landscapes)</p>	<p>Barbed wire, enclosed spaces, barracks Open spaces (Pyrenees, Catalan beaches) Mexico New York skyscrapers and galleries Marseille/Aix en Provence Serge's bedroom</p>	<p>Claustrophobic Open air but hostile climate Sun and colour, happy moments Stereotyped, simplified context Valentin's urban modern world Serge's end of life</p>

<p>Proxemic mode Positioning of characters (interpersonal distance, interactions)</p>	<p>Long shots of camp on the beach Contact between Serge and Valentin Camera placement for gendarmes and prisoners in camp</p>	<p>Isolation of Josep in camp Weakness and support Power, distress, submission</p>
<p>Gestural mode Body language, gestures, way of walking, costume and hairstyle</p>	<p>Quite static in camp More gestural (Kahlo) Serge immobilised in bed</p>	<p>Passive and helpless characters Danger associated with movement</p>
<p>Audio mode Music, sound and diegetic noises</p>	<p>Song ‘Todas las madres del mundo’ Offscreen noises and screams Use of silence</p>	<p>Expressing cultural and linguistic identities in songs Poetic effect Danger</p>
<p>Linguistic mode Dialogue, monologue, speech and voice-over</p>	<p>Voice-over (Serge) Reported speech Valentin’s questions Dialogue, insults and jokes</p>	<p>Multilingual dialogue and internal monologues Narrator (subjective point of view) Investigator Expresses power, danger, authority</p>

Table 6.5 Multimodal modes and their effects in *Josep* (Aurel.2020b)

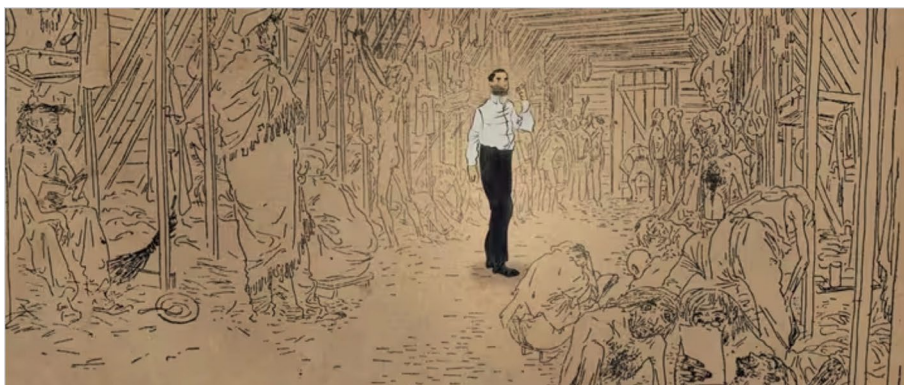


Figure 6.3 Shot from *Josep* (Aurel 2020b), blending the animation character and drawings by Bartoli. © *Josep* by Aurel, reproduced with permission from Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée.

'a journey through the twentieth century of this character with a thousand lives, from the underbelly of Barcelona to New York, from the 1960s to the 1990s, including the Spanish Civil War, the Retirada, Mexico and Frida Kahlo' (Aurel 2020a). His transmediation, or adaptation, is diachronic in the sense that it updates Bartoli's graphic style into animated images (see Figure 6.2). From this perspective, Aurel's artistic journey makes provision for new audiences of the twenty-first century.

When it comes to the transmission of collective memory and history, the transmediation process allows for expression in various ways: artistically in its pictorial style; graphically, with the animation of pictorial images, visually, through the use of perspective; and verbally, through dialogue and song. Aurel's film demonstrates how multimodal film-making creates powerful and universal communication by translating into film elements of Bartoli's biographic and artistic legacy that will resonate for new generational audiences. By blending multimodal materials (see Figure 6.3), *Josep* therefore lends itself well to a range of transmedia pedagogical activities.

Table 6.5 offers a number of other examples of multimodal strategies used to promote language learning. This worksheet can support the discovery of transnational cultures and diverse forms of creative expression and highlight effects produced on the viewers that students can analyse.

Having considered in this first case study a transmedia process from pictorial format to animation film, we now move to our second case study, which brings together other forms of media adaptations.

Case study 2: *Intemperie* – exploring multiple forms of transmediation

This case study focuses on transmediation from a Spanish literary text – *Intemperie* (Carrasco 2013) – into two different multimodal artefacts: a graphic novel (Rey 2016) and a film (Zambrano 2019). This proposal is particularly useful for identifying multimodal representation and communication in different media (see Table 6.1). It can generate activities for the critical analysis of extracts from the graphic novel and scenes from the film (see Table 6.2). More crucially, it can help learners to familiarise themselves with the processes used in transmediation from a novel into a graphic novel and a film. These two multimodal texts provide effective ways of fostering a deeper understanding of the linguistic, cultural and intellectual dimensions of the original literary text in the language classroom. The use of cross-media comparisons and film and graphic-novel adaptations can stimulate the study of literature among students, help them to develop a multimodal approach to critical thinking, reinforce reception skills such as reading and integrate multimodal literacies in curricula (Puig 2019). The use of these adaptations can facilitate transmediation activities, such as visualisation, the use of online translation tools and resources and collaborative translation activities (see Whicker 2019).

Making use of three versions of *Intemperie*, this case study examines the strategies employed to transfer content and formal features from one semiotic system (the novel) into multimodal texts – that is, a graphic novel and a film. A closer look at the graphic novel and the film reveals how this literary text is transmediated into a range of modes beyond writing, such as still and moving images, speech, sound effects and music, among others. Table 6.6 contains a list of the transmedia processes that take place between the original source and the adaptations. It lists elements that could be discussed when critically analysing the transmediation processes. We also examine how the adaptations transfer the instances of invariant core of the original text into new multimodal products. As the understanding and awareness of the multimodal distribution of meaning in multimodal texts can be key for informing translational decisions, this case study can be a useful model for enhancing students' translation skills and integrating more multimodal texts into the language classroom.

Since its publication in 2013, Carrasco's first novel, *Intemperie*, has received numerous awards and has been translated from Spanish into over 20 languages.⁴ As the writer himself has stated, *Intemperie* is a representation of the rural world in which he grew up. It is a tale of

Transfer process	Graphic novel adaptation	Film adaptation
<p>Narrative and structure Features retained and changed in plot, storytelling chronology, characters, genre</p>	<p>Similar plot focusing on the relationship between the main characters Storytelling related to violence and lack of morality Retaining a vague reference to the characters, location and chronology From two sections (novel) to a prologue, three sections and epilogue</p>	<p>Similar plot focusing on the relationship between the main characters Storytelling related to violence and lack of morality via genre conventions (western, thriller and road movie) Providing a specific reference to the location and the chronology (post-Spanish Civil War in Andalusia, year 1946) and to the main characters (names and nicknames)</p>
<p>Visual style Colour, typography, visual texture, shape, form, space</p>	<p>Poetic style, with a minimalist composition Sketches Use of colours with many textures</p>	<p>Barren landscape = western and road movie</p>
<p>Aural mode Music, sound effects, silence, spoken language (volume, tone of voice, accent), ambient noises</p>	<p>Not applicable to this type of novel</p>	<p>From third-person narration and a few dialogues to a more extensive use of dialogues</p>

<p>Artistic features Art and visual references</p>	<p>Intertextual references to the <i>España negra</i> legend: Luis Buñuel's <i>Tierra sin pan</i> (1933) (<i>Land without Bread</i>) and Miguel Delibes's <i>Los santos inocentes</i> (1981) (<i>The Holy Innocents</i>)</p>	<p>Intertextual references to the <i>España negra</i> legend (poverty) Other intertextual references to Carlos Saura's <i>La caza</i> (1966) and Cormac McCarthy's <i>The Road</i> (2006)</p>
<p>Communication priorities Relevant features and elements that are prioritised in the transfer of the story</p>	<p>Both focus on the land and how characters interact within the barren wasteland Poetic tone of the story Violence and nightmares Final message: kindness, compassion and forgiveness</p>	<p>Both focus on the land and how characters interact within the barren wasteland Poetic tone of the story Violence and nightmares Final message: kindness, compassion and forgiveness</p>
<p>Target audience and language level</p>	<p>Undergraduate language students (level B2–C1) and master's-level translation students (C1–C2)</p>	<p>Undergraduate language students (level B2–C1) and master's-level translation students (C1–C2)</p>

Table 6.6 Transmediation processes in *Intemperie* (2013 novel by Jesús Carrasco, 2016 graphic novel by Javi Rey and 2019 film adaptation by Benito Zambrano)

survival and personal growth. Situated in an indeterminate rural setting in Spain, it tells the story of a young boy fleeing from a drought-stricken land. It details the extreme violence of the abuse the boy suffers at the hands of the bailiff, the local authority, and his encounter with an old goatherd, which will change his fate. *Intemperie* is a universal story which can be interpreted as a metaphor for helplessness, lack of shelter/protection and the constant threat to the human condition due to the progressive damage to, and decline of, the environment (Pérez-Trujillo 2017).⁵ With no specific geographical or historical references, the story focuses on the relationships between the characters, who are at the mercy of the elements. In this dystopian vision of the world, there is an explicit depiction of violence and the corruption and inhumanity of those in authority.

Javi Rey adapted *Intemperie* into a graphic novel published by Planeta Cómic in 2016. It was also translated into other languages (French, English and Italian).⁶ For the graphic novel, Rey aimed to retain two fundamental features from the source text: first, the land and how characters interact within the barren wasteland and, secondly, the poetic tone of the story and how violence and a lack of morality are narrated. These two features will also guide our analysis of the transmediation processes. For example, the prologue of the graphic novel contextualises the hostile nature of the environment and introduces a narrative voice with the same poetic quality that characterises the original text. The first vignette presents a dead greyhound hanging from a tree (see Figure 6.4),



Figure 6.4 Vignette of a dead greyhound, representing the cruelty of the rural landscape. *Intemperie* by Javi Rey (based on Jesús Carrasco's [2013] novel). © Javi Rey, for the graphic novel (Planeta Cómic, 2016). © Jesús Carrasco for the novel (Seix Barral, 2013).

evoking the cruelty of the rural landscape. Below the image, the narrator compares the past and the present: ‘The town was built on the bed of a broad gully down which water has flowed at some point. Now it was just a long hollow in the middle of an endless plain’ (Rey 2018, 1). As Vigneron (2020, 4) notes, this image echoes the devastating imagery of an inhospitable landscape and human misery portrayed in Luis Buñuel’s *Tierra sin pan* (1933) [*Land without Bread*] and the cruelty of the callous rural domain run by the local *cacique* in Miguel Delibes’s *Los santos inocentes* (1981) [*The Holy Innocents*], turned into a film by Mario Camus in 1984.⁷

Carrasco’s minimalist literary style creates a schematic fragmentation of suggestive impressions. For instance, the physical suffering of the characters is narrated in detail throughout the novel.⁸ Rey opted to retain this poetic quality through the design of the images. In terms of graphic style, he chose a simple composition, with a few vignettes per page dedicated to a key episode of the story. In order to convey the tone of the story, he paid specific attention to the ‘freshness of execution that the sketches have [...] to transmit the strength of the story’ (Rey, in Jiménez 2016).

As noted by Laget (2018, 171), the sensorial quality of the verbal and visual representation of the landscape is central to “the quality of” the novel and the graphic adaptation. In Rey’s work, images narrate the actions. After the prologue, the rest of the graphic novel is divided into three parts, each introduced by a silent image and an epilogue. The first part opens with a blue-tone image of an empty bowl and cup at the boy’s feet; this explains, partly, why the young protagonist fled from the village and signals the care that he will later receive from the goatherd (see Figure 6.5). The second part focuses on his relationship with the goatherd in terms of mutual trust and solidarity. The vignette chosen is the Bible in the hand of the goatherd, referring to his religious beliefs and the spiritual lessons that the boy will learn from him. This section narrates the development of the friendship between the boy and the old man while they travel in search of pasture and water for the herd of goats. The third part is announced by an extreme close-up of a donkey’s head; the donkey accompanies the young protagonist until the end of the story and epitomises the legacy left to him by the goatherd at the end of their journey.

Colour is used to highlight the iconicity of the images and Rey makes use of it as a way of translating the tone of the characters’ emotions. In fact, the colour scheme is one of the most useful tools employed by Rey to transfer core invariant features of Carrasco’s novel. To mark the



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Figure 6.5 Vignette representing an empty bowl and cup at the feet of a child. *Intemperie* by Javi Rey (based on Jesús Carrasco's [2013] novel). © Javi Rey, for the graphic novel (Planeta Cómico, 2016). © Jesús Carrasco for the novel (Seix Barral, 2013).

significance of the dry landscape, Rey applies colour with many 'textures' to convey the perceptions and feelings associated with exposure to the inclemency and the weather. Shades of yellow and orange are employed to stress the scarcity of water and the heat that suffocates the characters in this harsh environment. Similarly, colour is applied to narrate the violence and lack of morality. For example, the use of colour visually enhances the boy's nightmares and trauma as the vignettes change colour – from yellow and brown to blue in the first nightmare in the first part of the story, and from dark blue to green and blue in the second part – while red and orange tones reinforce the bailiff's monstrous characterisation in the sequences relating to the nightmares (see [Figure 6.6](#)).

In 2019, the novel was adapted for cinema by Benito Zambrano, with a script written by Pablo Remón, Daniel Remón and Benito Zambrano.⁹ The film adaptation uses different strategies to transfer aspects of the invariant core of the original text: the central role of space (*a la intemperie*) and the human side of the story – that is, the boy's transformative journey and the friendship between the goatherd and the boy. The film avoids the vague geographical reference of the novel. The plateau region of Granada – a dry land with canyons, badlands, ravines and valleys – conveys the leitmotif of a land without water. Similarly, the narrative of the film is set



Figure 6.6 Image of the boy's nightmare, illustrating that the bailiff is the real monster. *Intemperie* by Javi Rey (based on Jesús Carrasco's [2013] novel). © Javi Rey, for the graphic novel (Planeta Cómico, 2016). © Jesús Carrasco for the novel (Seix Barral, 2013).

in 1946. The specific historical setting contextualises the references to hunger and violence in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. Zambrano's (2019) film version is a story of *cortijos* (farmhouses) and peasants in a state of near-slavery due to caciquism and the prevalence of *latifundia* lands in Andalusia after 1939. Thus, the lower-class misery depicted in Carrasco's novel was one of the invariant core elements transferred to the film adaptation in the form of the poverty of the Andalusian landless peasant farmers, who suffered decades of brutality and abuses of power. These intertextual references can be associated with the archetypes of the *España negra* legend, characterised by the harshness and poverty of the rural areas (Bozal 2020; Esparza 2020).

In Carrasco's novel, the characters are unnamed and therefore represent archetypes. However, in the adaptation process, biographical characteristics have been added. For example, in the film adaptation the solitary old man is also known by the nickname *el Moro* ('the Moor'), suggesting a connection to the Rif War (II Moroccan War) (1922–1926), a cruel postcolonial conflict that brought the future Spanish dictator Francisco Franco to prominence. The foreman's knife with the swastika symbol is another example of anchoring a character in a specific historical context by connecting the Francoist and Nazi regimes and ideologies.

One more point to be added in connection with the transfer across modes and the recomposition of the novel into film is the lyric depiction of the characters' emotions through music and poetry. Inspired by Federico García Lorca's and Antonio Machado's poetry, Javier Ruibal's lullaby

'Intemperie' – interpreted by Silvia Pérez Cruz – transfers the story of the young boy and his suffering to music and verbal representation.

Another major strategy employed for adapting the literary text into a film is the use of specific genre conventions. *Intemperie* can be identified as a western in which the barren landscapes are symbolic of the marginal position of the characters. In the face of adversity the relationship between the old man and the young boy becomes something resembling a father–son relationship. The plot is reappropriated as a thriller, with the hunt being used as a narrative device to keep the attention of the audience through chases, action and revenge; the mystery of what is hidden by the boy's past is similarly employed. One can recognise references to Carlos Saura's *La caza* (1966) [*The Hunt*], whose allegorical setting evokes the cruelty and violence perpetrated during the Spanish Civil War. The film also uses the genre conventions associated with road movies, with clear similarities to Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* (2006) in the storyline. The goatherd's kindness and compassion transmit a pacifist message, which is reinforced by the note in the credits at the end of the film: *A todos los que enseñan a perdonar* ('To those who teach us to forgive'). This moral point reinforces intertextual references to other literary and film works that have reflected on the ongoing process of trauma and historical memory in contemporary Spain.¹⁰

Activities based on this case study could include the creation of a blog to compare literary works that have been transmediated into a film or a graphic novel, or a vlog to analyse the motivations of the character in each text. Digital storytelling can enhance students' media skills through, for example, the production of a short video that analyses a fragment of one of the works. Designing a new version of the book trailer or the film trailer can also be complemented with audiovisual translation tasks – subtitling or audio description, for example. Finally, we suggest exploring different booktuber or filmtuber genres – review, ranking, unboxing, (book)haul – and tags that could engage learners in finding associations with their own preferences for literary works, films or TV series.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a framework to enhance secondary and higher education language students' translation skills by engaging them in a close analysis of the processes and strategies involved in intermedial adaptation, cross-media, trans-genre storytelling and narrative expansion. The model has been illustrated with two proposals

that educators may find useful when integrating transmedia examples into language curricula.

From a pedagogical perspective, the film *Josep* can be used to develop learners' visual literacy and intersemiotic analysis skills as well as their language and critical thinking skills. Tables 6.1 to 6.4 provide a base for specific exercises. The activities can include the creation of derivative artefacts involving image analyses and narrative exercises adopting different points of view. The second case study draws on transmediation processes. A cross-media comparison of *Intemperie* (novel, graphic novel and film) can encourage learners to foster a deeper understanding of the linguistic, cultural and intellectual dimensions of the original literary text and of its adaptations. Understanding the strategies and techniques employed to transmediate the novel into multimodal texts will enhance language learners' critical analysis and translation skills. We have proposed a series of indicative activities that will support a multimodal, collaborative and interactive use of transmediation practices, based on examples similar to the case studies presented in this chapter.

Ultimately, what we have shown in this chapter is that translation, as an interdisciplinary pedagogical practice, offers a useful model for creating innovative activities for the language classroom, not just working at an interlingual level but also exploring intersemiotic transfers that lead to transmedia practices. This should encourage language educators to use more contemporary multimodal texts in their classrooms.

The participatory nature of popular culture is already transforming language learning in formal and informal settings. The examples presented in this chapter have demonstrated how transmedia popular texts can be adapted to students' needs and interests, increasing their motivation. Further research is required to evaluate the relationship between factors that can enhance the uptake and productive use of transmedia materials in the language classroom. Moreover, there is a need to undertake more research projects on the changing role of transmedia practices in language pedagogy to support educators in integrating these materials and activities into curricula.

Notes

- 1 This case study is part of the project Vessels of Communication (Rewriting and Story Transfer in the Hispanic World), led by Dr Carmen Herrero within the Film, Languages and Media in Education (FLAME) group at Manchester Metropolitan University. This project seeks to investigate literary, artistic and filmic intertextuality through the reflections of novelists,

- playwrights, poets, film and television directors, creators of comics and video games. In collaboration with the Instituto Cervantes in Manchester, this project was launched with Jesús Carrasco as guest author in November 2022.
- 2 During the 2022 edition of the Beyond Babel Film Festival, *Josep* was screened as a Film Day event for Year 12 French and Spanish students in Manchester. The film was also used in a film literacy workshop organised for French classes (Year 10 equivalent) at the College Pierre Loti in Istanbul, Turkey, in March 2023.
 - 3 Aurel was born in 1980 in the Ardèche region. He trained as a graphic artist and has been the cartoon illustrator of the political columns in *Le Monde*. For more detailed contextual information, see Aurel (2020a) and Batalla (2020).
 - 4 Jesús Carrasco was born in Badajoz, Spain, in 1972. His family later moved to a village in Toledo. He has published four novels at the time of writing.
 - 5 Some scholars have seen *Intemperie* as part of neoruralism (Champeau 2019), a literary trend that advocates a return to the so-called *España vacía* ('empty Spain'), which refers to the depopulation of the rural areas of inland Spain (Molino 2016).
 - 6 Born in Brussels, Javi Rey is an illustrator and comic book artist. He studied at the Joso School in Barcelona and since then has worked in France and Spain.
 - 7 Carrasco's narrative has been compared to Miguel Delibes's literary works. Most of Delibes's novels are set in a rural environment and his literary style has been commended for the richness and precision of the rural language. However, Carrasco has confessed his preference for Cormac McCarthy's aesthetics, which is characterised by the lyric depiction of places and characters' emotions.
 - 8 To facilitate the reading, we use the English translation of Javi Rey's graphic novel adaptation (Rey 2018).
 - 9 *Intemperie* stars Luis Tosar, Luis Callejo, Vicente Romero, Manolo Caro, Kándido Uranga and the young actor Jaime López.
 - 10 The Pacto de Olvido ('Pact of Forgetting') was set up after Franco's death in 1975. Since then, the Ley de Memoria Histórica ('Historical Memory Law') was approved by the Spanish Government in 2007 to recognise and broaden the rights of those who suffered persecution or violence during the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship and to establish measures in favour of them.

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