Writing foreign: the paradoxes of Baudelaire’s neologizing strategies in his translations of Poe

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Introduction: Baudelaire’s Poe

In 1856, when Baudelaire published his first collection of translations of Poe’s short stories, \textit{Histoires extraordinaires}, he was still a neophyte poet with about a dozen poems and one \textit{Salon} which he had published in the magazine press. Baudelaire had also made himself known from 1848 onwards as Poe’s translator by publishing several of his translations in separate issues in the press, and had become the French Poe specialist through his first biographical essay on Poe (“Edgar Allan Poe : sa vie et ses ouvrages,” published in

\textsuperscript{1} Writing foreign: Antoine Berman uses the term “écrire-étranger” in his 1995 \textit{Pour une critique des traductions : John Donne}, where he instructs the translation critic to find “Ces ‘zones textuelles’ où le traducteur a écrit-étranger en français et, ainsi, produit un français neuf, … les zones de grâce et de richesse du texte traduit” (Berman, 1995: 66). By “écrit-étranger en français” Berman is referring to a translation strategy elaborated in \textit{La Traduction et la lettre, ou l’auberge du lointain} (Berman, 1985) which sets a framework for an ethics of translation that aims for an “éducation à l’étrangeté” (ibid.: 86) by which the translator manages “à reconnaître et à recevoir l’Autre en tant qu’Autre,” (ibid.: 88) because “La visée éthique, poétique et philosophique de la traduction consiste à manifester dans sa langue cette pure nouveauté en préservant son visage de nouveauté” (ibid.: 89). With “écrit-étranger” Berman is referring, then, to an overt translation stance which respects the foreignness of the work, and “écrit-étranger” is equated with a type of literalism which Berman calls “fidélité à la lettre,” as opposed to “fidelité à l’esprit.” Berman’s ethical literalism to which \textit{writing foreign} refers resembles the “ultimate” translation strategy discussed by Steiner with reference to Hölderlin’s work (Steiner, 1992: 341) and Venuti’s “close translation.” (see Venuti, 1995)
the *Revue de Paris* in 1852 (Baudelaire, 1951: 1001-1029)), in which he had forged information gleaned from Poe’s American biographers into a persona which coincided strongly with his own character and literary tastes. Though Baudelaire would soon find out that the weaknesses he had ascribed to Poe (mainly drug abuse, alcoholism and a sexual preference for young girls) had been discredited as part of a campaign of calumnyation by some of Poe’s American biographers, he continued to maintain Poe’s image in his reflection. Baudelaire’s deformed Poe was exported far beyond the French borders and most Europeans and Russians first came to know Poe through Baudelaire’s translations and his “biographical” materials, as Le Bleis confirms: “Les traductions et les essais critiques de Baudelaire constituent la source principale des publications en russe.” (Le Bleis, 2010: 135) While in most countries subsequent re-translations from Poe’s original text (instead of from Baudelaire’s translation) became widespread, in France, Baudelaire’s version is still the only Poe known to the general public today, and no retranslations of what Baudelaire translated have so far reached the non-academic reader.² It seems as if Baudelaire’s own myth has put a spell on these texts, making them forever un-retranslatable—and, by the same virtue, following Antoine Berman’s statements about the role of criticism and retranslation (see Berman, 1990: 1-7 and Berman, 1995: 38-43), making the continuing discussion of these translations a condition of the survival of Poe in France:

> Si nous estimons que la critique littéraire est essentielle à la vie des œuvres (et de la lecture qui est un moment de cette vie), nous devons considérer, sur le fondement de ce qui a été dit, que la critique des traductions l’est tout autant, et donc accorder à cette partie de la critique tout le sérieux que l’on accorde à celle relative aux œuvres. (Ibid.: 43)

## Two neologizers

The reviews that followed the publication of *Histoires extraordinaires* show that Baudelaire’s biographical essays had achieved their purpose in confirming him as the ideal man to translate Poe’s work: “Mieux que personne, M. Charles Baudelaire, par son talent fougueux et un peu incohérent, était

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² My attention has been drawn to a translation of “The Tell Tale Heart” which is rather difficult to obtain: Amette, Jacques-Pierre and Richard, Claude (éd.), 1975, “Le Dit du cœur,” in *Delta* (1), Montpellier, Centre d’étude et de recherches sur les écrivains du sud aux États-Unis.
propre à bien traduire les contes terribles d’E. A. Poe” writes a reviewer in the Revue de Paris (Bandy, 1933: 23). The translations also clearly bear Baudelaire’s personal stamp since, in spite of their apparent literalness, they tend to sensationalize the analytical tales and render the fantastic tales in a more gothic version, thus turning Poe’s texts into a very Baudelairean corpus. It should be kept in mind that these largely positive reviews discuss a translation which appeared at a time when the translational horizon was such that “the translation of recent prose works could yield a great variety of results, without giving offence to either critic or publisher,” (Lambert et al., 1985: 157). The 1850s were indeed a time of transition and while some experiments in translation, such as Chateaubriand’s translation of Milton’s Paradise Lost, had recently shaken things up considerably, the main trend continued to be fluent and often highly adaptive translations. It does not therefore seem all that surprising that a recurring criticism on Baudelaire’s very literal and close translations was that it contained too many neologisms: Bandy quotes reviewers like de Pontmartin who, in l’Assemblée nationale of 12 April 1856, criticized the presence of certain “paillettes néologiques” in the translations (Bandy, 1933: 24), or Louis Étienne, who indicates in the Revue contemporaine of 15 July 1857 that the “quelques néologismes” (ibid.: 33) did not detract from the general fluency of the translations.

These allusions to neologizing strategies probably stem in the first place from the pervasive (though, as I have just indicated, crucially inconsistent) verbum-pro-verbo operations which characterize Baudelaire’s translations and which often result in anglicized syntax. More to the point of the present study, the translations also became the occasion for Baudelaire to introduce words and compounds which he coined or used for the first time: of the hundred or so words which feature in the Trésor de la langue française (TLF) as having been introduced into the French language by Charles Baudelaire, around thirty were crafted in the process of translating Poe’s tales. These neologisms are not always salient enough to strike the modern reader as strange or new words, but it is likely that in Baudelaire’s time words like “nébuliste”

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3. For a demonstration on how Baudelaire adds sensational aspects and increases the morbid and sinister atmosphere in Poe’s analytical “tales of ratiocination”, see Wallaert, 2001. For a discussion of the ways in which Baudelaire’s versions result in a shift from the fantastic to the gothic genre, see Wallaert, 2009.
(Poe, 1989: 1160) or “solidiforme” (ibid.: 146), which do not feature in the TLF, would have had a de-familiarizing effect on his French readers.

Another reason why it does not come as much of a surprise to find these neologisms in the translations is that after all, Baudelaire was translating Poe, and it is well-known that Poe was not only a creator of new literary genres but also a profuse progenitor of words, a fact that is exhaustively documented by Burton R. Pollin, who found nine hundred and fifty-four words created by Poe which either do not feature in the OED, or for which Poe’s is the first, first-dated or only occurrence (Pollin, 1974: 81). Many of these new words occur in the texts which Baudelaire translated, while others feature in texts which Baudelaire is certain to have read.4

### Lexical creativity and literal affinity

Still, the neologisms featuring in Baudelaire’s translations only partly mirror what he found in the source texts, and some of them feature in places where there is no neologism in the source texts. This raises a number of questions, which we will tackle in this study, concerning the ways in which Baudelaire translated Poe’s neologisms and the instances where Baudelaire added his own newly coined words. Moreover, on a meta-textual level I will also attempt to pinpoint the effects that the continuing practice of translating Poe’s neologizing innovations may have had on the fledgling French poet. Following Willis Barnstone, who refers to Quintilian in the very sensible notion that “Translation is the teacher of poets” (Barnstone, 1993: 113), the idea that Baudelaire may have been stimulated and inspired by translating Poe’s lexico-genetic creativity does not seem too far-fetched: Baudelaire’s repeated claims that Poe resembled him are at the same time a clear affirmation that their work also became closely similar: “Eh bien ! on m’accuse, moi, d’imiter Edgar Poe ! Savez-vous pourquoi j’ai si patiemment traduit Poe ? Parce qu’il me ressemblait.” (Baudelaire, 1976: 386)

4. It is known, for instance, that Baudelaire managed to obtain two years’ worth of articles from the Southern Literary Messenger when Poe was editing there: “J’ai là, devant moi, la collection des numéros [of the S.L.M.] de ces deux années,” writes Baudelaire in 1852 (1976: 273). Moreover, Baudelaire often discussed Poe’s work for the SLM, a publication which would have given him copious helpings of the neologisms which Poe used even more profusely in his reviews and editorials than in his tales.
In spite of this intimate literary affinity, which supposedly resulted in what Meschonnic calls a “traduction affinité” (Meschonnic, 1999: 91), we now know that Poe’s and Baudelaire’s temperaments were highly dissimilar, and that writing was a very different experience for each of them. There is nothing in A.H. Quinn’s biography that would induce the belief that Poe’s inspiration was anything but cornucopian, while several testimonies, including Baudelaire’s own, indicate that for the French poet creative writing was an arduous task (see Pichois, 1967: 242-261), and though this laboriousness may be partly attributed to the distractions caused by his uncomfortable financial circumstances, Claude Pichois seems convinced that this creative difficulty was a characteristic of the poet’s makeup— to be ascribed, then, to the fact that the muse visits some writers more often than others. This difference in creative productivity should be kept in mind when we look at how Baudelaire dealt with Poe’s tendency to create new words.

The questions which will be asked in this paper follow a thread that will take us from textual detail into the meta-textual aspects of the translation process, and we will begin our enquiry with the two following questions:

– How did Baudelaire translate the neologisms he encountered in Poe’s texts?
– When did Baudelaire spontaneously introduce his own neologisms (i.e. when there is no neologism in the source text)?

Beyond these two questions we will, moreover, look at the ways in which Baudelaire’s experience of translating a profusely neologizing author may have affected his own work, and enquire whether there are any links between Baudelaire’s own word creations, two thirds of which appear in his essays on art and in his literary criticism, and those which appear in his translations of Poe. As Barnstone explains, “To translate the work of another poet affords the poet other experience, diction, prosody, which may soon enter his or her own work” (Barnstone, 1993: 108) and it seems indeed very appropriate to call this process a “self-reflexive labour” (ibid.: 108), because the poet not only learns his craft from his work as a translator in the sense in which Quintilian suggested, but is inevitably influenced, not in the first place by the source author, but by his own texts which he creates as a translator. In the case of Baudelaire and Poe, this therefore brings a third question, namely:

– Are any of the neologisms which Baudelaire created for the translations carried over in his own writings (poetry or prose)?
Lastly, as Baudelaire was also an avid reader of Poe’s works beyond those he translated, we will raise a fourth question, which could be formulated as such:

– Can any of the neologisms which Baudelaire created in his own work be traced back to neologisms which Baudelaire found in his readings of texts by Poe (texts which he did not necessarily translate, but which he is sure to have read)?

These last two questions are prompted by previous observations of other forms of self-reflexive imitation in Baudelaire’s oeuvre, where pastiche, amalgamation, close paraphrasing and unacknowledged translation were an integral part of the creative process, as Emily Salines and others before her have amply pointed out. There are texts by Poe which Baudelaire did not translate but which had a very considerable impact on him, so much so that he incorporated parts of them into his own writings, sometimes without changing Poe’s very specific wording. It is relatively well-known, for instance, that Baudelaire incorporated large parts of Poe’s “The Poetic Principle” in his “Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe,” which features some of Baudelaire’s views on the role of art and poetry,\(^5\) but less well-known is the fact that Baudelaire then repeats these same passages in an essay on Théophile Gautier, indicating that he is citing not Poe, but himself—thus already having adopted Poe’s words as his own. Salines amply demonstrates how pervasively such appropriations were interwoven with Baudelaire’s own creations, and states that this is what most strongly typifies Baudelaire’s creative process (see Salines, 2004: 121), while at the same time acknowledging Bandy’s point that such palimpsestic writing was not exceptional in Baudelaire’s time and should not be judged by contemporary standards:

As Bandy warns us, again using metaphors of legal trial: “in judging Baudelaire’s behavior we must first of all take into account the literary mores of his time, and not attempt to convict him on the basis of practices and attitudes that prevail in our own time.” (Ibid.: 125)

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\(^5\) The question whether these and other passages, which Baudelaire lifted from Poe and incorporated into his own writings without any clear acknowledgement, constitute acts of plagiarism, continues to divide scholars and should not be judged in terms of our contemporary perception of what constitutes plagiarism. See for a discussion of the issue, for instance, Bandy, 1953, Brix, 2003, or Valéry, 1963.
Of course the issue here is not to judge Baudelaire’s re-writings on contemporary ethical grounds, but to continue to develop the study of what has been called a “grande traduction” (Berman, 1990: 2), which features a translator who not only honors his source author by absorbing him completely and adding his own ingredients to the translations, but who also re-uses the digested materials in his own work, thereby taking the anthropophagic metaphor which Haroldo de Campos applied to translation one step beyond cannibalism. This paper is an attempt to do so by examining some specific lexical details of a process which, to continue in the terms of the Brazilian metaphor, may be termed “auto-cannibalism”.

**Baudelaire’s translations of Poe’s neologisms**

Before tackling the question of how Baudelaire translated Poe’s neologisms, we will briefly look at the kinds of word creation strategies Poe applied, and examine when and why he introduced such newly created lexical items into his texts, an examination which should allow us to put Baudelaire’s translation strategies into perspective. A perusal of Pollin’s study, an updated version of which can be found on the website of the Poe Society (www.eapoe.org), shows that firstly, Poe’s lexical creations followed a panoply of neologizing techniques which covers a good part of the categories proposed by Pruvost and Sablayrolles (2003: 96-119). Pollin’s list (1974: 23-80) features cases of verbal prefixation with the prefixes *be-* and *en-* added mainly to past participles (*beseamed, bemystified, bepuffed, and enjeweled or enwrapped*); of suffixation (frequently resulting in a change of grammatical category) with the suffixes *-ism, -ness, -ist, -ly, -al, -less* or *-esque* (*busybodyism, cadaverousness, charadist, chillily, chasmal, compassless, dilettantesque*); of new compounds (*counter-vortex, sleight-of-pen*); of what Pruvost and Sablayrolles (2003: 106) call “les mots composés savants,” (i.e. learned compounds), which are generally based on Latin or Greek root-words (*inequidistance or cryptograph*) and sometimes feature prefixes (*de-euphonized*) or suffixes (*cryptographer, didacticism*); and of semi-onomatopoeia which moreover occur in a different spelling (*bugaboo*). In short, the ways in which Poe neologized are extremely varied and he often combined several of the procedures enumerated by Pruvost and Sablayrolles at once, as most prolix neologizers tend to do.
Secondly, in examining when and why these new terms are introduced, two main textual circumstances can be observed: the neologisms appear either in humorous or ironic contexts or in Poe’s scientific and pseudo-scientific work (the latter category thus somewhat overlapping the first). In his literary criticism, reviews and tales, the new words serve Poe’s incisive sarcasm, enhancing the irony and deepening the parodies in which he often uses them “to exploit the language and situations of specialized groups” (Justus, 1987: 74), or simply out of sheer playfulness. In his scientific essays, Poe mostly creates terms for lack of an existing term in English, and the terms are very often suffixed or affixed Latin or Greek-based terms, such as *imparticularity* or *unincorporated*.

Baudelaire’s translations of these neologisms vary considerably and include some contradictory translation strategies. Omissions are rare—I have found only one occurrence—, while the largely predominant strategy is that of standardization, a term which Renner applies to cases where “le caractère marqué de la lexie complexe de départ n’est pas rendu du tout” (Renner, 2011: 158) and which refer to cases where Baudelaire renders the neologism by a standard unmarked term, thus “explaining” Poe’s neologism by rendering it more explicitly or clearly. Another frequently occurring strategy are structural calques, a term which translates “calque de structure” (*ibid.*). for cases where the same pattern is used in both source and target text. In this study “structural calque” will refer to coinages that are carbon copies of the English, which have been adapted to the phonetic, orthographical and grammatical restrictions of French. We will here focus on these two strategies, which are paradoxical in their degree of intervention on the translator’s part: standardization has the effect of rendering the translation more fluent and less foreign-sounding, while a structural calque is consistent with close and literal translation and does not aim at (increased) fluency. We will therefore begin by examining the effect of both translation choices in the target text and look at how they square with what Poe had originally written.

**Standardization**

The strategy which Baudelaire most frequently used when confronted with a Poe neologism is that of standardization and a first example, which also entails translation loss, occurs in the following passage from “The Imp of the Perverse” / “Le démon de la perversité”:  

*PALIMPSESTES 25*
It cannot be denied that phrenology and, in great measure, all metaphysi-
cianism, have been concocted \textit{a priori}. (Poe, 1978b: 1219)  
Il est impossible de nier que la phrénologie et une bonne partie des 
sciences métaphysiques ont été brassées \textit{a priori}. (Poe, 1989: 866) 

The term \textit{metaphysicianism}, which does not feature in the \textit{OED}, is one of those neologisms which Poe created by adding the suffix \textit{-ism}, here to a noun referring to a person (a metaphysician). Poe uses this procedure in several other contexts, and it often serves to expand a deprecatory noun for a person into another noun, as in \textit{bullyism}, \textit{busy-bodyism}, or \textit{dunderheadism}. \textit{Metaphysicianism} is also encountered in Poe’s “Marginalia”, where he compares Shelley’s art with “the out-of-place didacticism of Wordsworth and the more anomalous metaphysicianism of Coleridge” (Poe, 1984b: 1446). Baudelaire’s very neutral and serious translation by \textit{sciences métaphysiques} obviously loses the negative content and the irony of Poe’s derisive \textit{metaphysicianism}, and as the translation’s unmarked noun phrase is still the passive subject of the verb \textit{brassées} which does translate the sarcasm in \textit{concocted}, this standardizing translation is contradictory in itself. Baudelaire, who maintains the Greek roots of \textit{meta} and \textit{phusika} could have formed \textit{métaphysicianisme} in the same way as Poe formed his neologism in English, but opted not to do so, possibly because the French language does not lend itself to such exercises in flexibility as easily as English does. The result is that the defamiliarizing effect of the neologism, which in Poe’s text foregrounds the term as a device for mockery, is lost in the translation, as well as the irony it contained. 

Another one of Poe’s \textit{-ism} coinages must have also caused Baudelaire quite some trouble, as French offers few close alternatives for this case:  

The suspicious circumstances which invest him, will be found to tally much better with my hypothesis of \textit{romantic busy-bodyism}, than with the reasoner’s suggestion of guilt. (Poe, 1978b: 748)  
Les circonstances suspectes dont il est enveloppé cadrent bien mieux avec mon hypothèse d’un caractère officieux, tatillon et romanesque, qu’avec l’insinuation du journaliste relative à sa culpabilité. (Poe, 1989: 626) 

Again, Baudelaire opts for a standardizing translation in which, moreover, he over-translates by adding \textit{tatillon} to \textit{officieux}, thus further enhancing the idea of an exaggerated attachment to rules and to detail while losing
the aspect of unwarranted meddling into other people’s affairs which busy-bodyism contains. On the other hand, Baudelaire’s translation of romantic by romanesque reduces the seriousness and the ideological charges which a direct translation into romantique would have entailed. So far then, the effect of these standardizations is to tone down Poe’s humor in passages that are clearly intended to sound ironic, though Baudelaire compensates the “losses” by other small details in his translation.

The following extract from The narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym is a rather more lyrical passage than the previous one, and here the effect of Baudelaire’s standardizing strategy is of a different nature:

[...] how chillily and heavily (disjointed, as it thus was, from any foregoing words to qualify or render it distinct) did its vague syllables fall, [...] (Poe, 1996: 1035)

Comme cette syllabe vague, détachée de la série des mots précédents qui la qualifiaient et la rendaient distincte, tombait, pesante et glacée, [...] (Poe, 1989: 229)

Baudelaire does not neologise to translate chillily, a word which Poe formed by adding the suffix -ly to the standard adjective chilly, and which results in a change of grammatical category (from adjective to adverb), and in a sonorous effect with the alliterative /il/ sound repeated in chillily, heavily and syllable. Interestingly, while Baudelaire’s standardization does change the rhythm of the original sentence he produces a clause that is quite as rhythmical, and which, moreover, occurring at the end of the sentence, maintains the focus on the same semantic unit (pesante et glacée for chillily and heavily) that was emphasized by being fronted in the original. However, Baudelaire could have opted for the slightly more salient adjective glaçante, which existed and would have maintained the agency of all this frostiness with the falling syllable (as in the original), and moreover resulted in a rhyming noun phrase with the preceding adjective (pesante et glaçante)—though some readers might find this a little too heavy and sonorous an alternative. While some of the sonorous effects of Poe’s original sentence are thus lost, the rhythm and focus are for the most part maintained, even though Baudelaire here opts for a standardizing translation.

Another case of standardization constitutes, at the same time, a case of localization, in the sense of cultural adaptation:
I read no “Night Thoughts”—no fustian about church-yards—no bugaboo tales—such as this. (Poe, 1978b: 969)

Dans mes lectures, plus de Nuits; plus d’histoires extravagantes de cimetières, plus de contes de croque-mitaine comme celui que vous venez de lire. (Poe, 1989: 764)

The *OED* indicates that Poe was the first to write *bugaboo* in its contemporary spelling, and lists a single previous occurrence, dated 1740, in a different spelling and pronunciation: *buggybow* (*OED* I: 1160)—which makes Poe’s neologism a combination of an onomatopoeia formed through a change of spelling (the element *bow* having been rewritten as *boo* to refer to the fear these tales can arouse) and a second change of spelling (* buggy* has become *buga*) which, combined with the first, results in a completely new word. The word is here used by Poe to refer to tales that employ easy techniques to scare readers and indicates a certain disdain of the speaker towards these tales—the italicized *such as this* denotes a certain amount of self-mockery on the part of Poe, who was often accused of writing cheap gothic horror. As for Baudelaire’s translation of this neologism, the *TLF* gives Hugo as the first author to use *croque-mitaine* in 1820 (*TLF* 6: 537), which indicates that the term was a well-established and standard term by the time Baudelaire used it. This means that Baudelaire steers away from a salient Poe neologism and opts for a transparent translation using a culturally adapted and unmarked equivalent. Again, though, it must be pointed out that Baudelaire did not have that many alternatives, and that *croque-mitaine* does contain the idea of “cheap” or at least “childish” scaring techniques.

What we have seen so far, then, is that standardization, which is the most frequently adopted strategy with which Baudelaire translated Poe’s neologisms, results more often than not in less marked passages, and in some translation loss, especially when the marked term serves the irony in Poe’s texts. It is impossible to tell at this point in time whether Baudelaire’s was consciously aiming at “normalizing” his text (Hewson, 2001: 196), but we can state that the effect of Baudelaire’s standardizations in these cases amounts to “[...] removing anything that might be regarded as ‘foreign’ (a cultural reference, a syntactic structure)” (*ibid.*: 196) which, as I have already stated, does not correspond to his overall strategy of literal and close translation. As
we will now see, there are also many occasions where Baudelaire translated Poe’s neologisms by creating a word that was new in the French language too.

**Structural calques**

The instances where Baudelaire translates a Poe neologism by a self-made neologism, and which we have called “structural calques” (see above), are instances of the more general translation strategy which Ballard calls “le report,” namely “un acte de traduction consistant à reporter dans le texte d’arrivée un élément du texte de départ pour des raisons de nécessité (trou lexical)” (Ballard, 2003: 154). Ballard’s phrase “acte de traduction” implies that these are not terms which the French language adopted and which became widely used in French, in other words, that these are neologisms created *ad hoc*. Not surprisingly, the cases where Baudelaire creates structural calques mainly concern Poe’s learned compounds, i.e. words which Poe formed from a Latin or Greek root whose meaning he maintains and expands (mainly through suffixation or prefixation) and which occur mostly in those contexts previously labeled as “scientific and pseudo-scientific”—though the latter category here constitutes the majority of our examples. Whichever the contextual environment may be, it will become apparent that replacing a neologism by a very similar neologism in the target text results in translations which are most likely to obtain the same effect, either increasing the humor or quite simply filling in a lexical gap. The first example is taken from “Mesmeric Revelation” / “Révélation magnétique”:

> [...] for mind, existing unincorporate, is merely God. (Poe, 1978b: 1036)
> [... ] car l’esprit existant incorporellement, c’est Dieu. (Poe, 1989: 769)

For *unincorporate*, the *OED* lists an 1822 occurrence in Byron with the meaning “unembodied” (*OED* XI: 228), so this learned compound based on the Latin verb *incorporare* can still be considered as freshly coined when Poe used it in 1844. Baudelaire’s structural calque *incorporellement* is listed in the *TLF* as an “adverbe rare,” and only Baudelaire’s occurrence is given (*TLF* 10: 50). This structural calque implies no change either in register or tone, and the translation here achieves a reproduction of the original effect.

Other learned compounds which Baudelaire was faced with are translated in the same way and with the same effect: *imparticularity* (in *Eureka*,
Poe, 1996: 1277), a word which is not in the OED, translated by Baudelaire as *imparticularité* (Poe, 1989: 1125) (not in TLF); *consubstantialism*, which occurs in “Lionizing” and for which the OED gives a first occurrence for 1860, thus ignoring Poe’s preceding one (OED II: 882), translated into *consubstantialisme* (Poe, 1989: 146) for which the TLF, listing this example from the Baudelaire translations, gives Baudelaire as the first to use the noun derived from *consubstantialité* (TLF 6: 16). Further examples are the three new nouns which Poe introduces in his parody “Lionizing”: *aëriforms, fluidiforms, and solidiforms* (Poe, 1978a: 182), translated by Baudelaire as *les aériformes, les fluidiformes et les solidiformes* (Poe, 1989: 146), of which *aériforme* is not listed in the TLF as a noun (TLF 1: 784), while Baudelaire is given as first source for the noun *fluidiforme* (TLF 8: 1005), and *solidiforme* does not feature in the TLF at all. Poe’s *sub-commentaries* (Poe, 1978a: 366) in “The Devil in the Belfry” is translated as *sous-commentaires* (Poe, 1989: 391), a compound which does not occur in the TLF, while Poe’s neologism *unparticled*, which is repeated several times in “Mesmeric Revelation” (Poe, 1978b: 1033-1034) becomes *imparticulée* (Poe, 1989: 771), which does not occur in the TLF either. In the same story the translation of “Man thus divested would be God—would be unindividuated” (Poe, 1978b: 1036) features *désindividualisé* (Poe, 1989: 770), which the TLF dates to 1924, without listing Baudelaire’s neologistic employment of the adjective in his translation (TLF 6: 1283). There are more examples of structural calques, but this series will suffice to demonstrate that when Baudelaire did create a neologism after Poe, he mainly produced Frenchified carbon copies of the source text terms and maintained the meaning and the effect in the target texts—a technique which is consistent with his overall stance of close translation.

So far, then, two translation strategies, standardization and structural calque, have been studied. The underlying system which prompted Baudelaire to opt for either of these is the following: the neologizing translations or calques were created for the “technical” neologisms which Poe used for notions of a (pseudo)scientific or philosophical nature and for which there was a lexical gap in French. Apart from these, Baudelaire’s encounters with Poe’s neologisms mainly resulted in transparent translation strategies (standardization) which reduce the ironic effect in the translated texts and are contrary to his overall stance of literalness. This contradiction in translation strategies is
reinforced by the fact that Baudelaire also introduced neologisms in his translations where there aren’t any in the source texts, as we will now see.

**Writing foreign: Baudelaire’s spontaneous neologizing**

There are many occasions where Baudelaire introduces a neologism where Poe’s text does not contain one—a strategy of *writing foreign* which reminds us of what Berman states in *La Traduction et la lettre ou l’auberge du lointain*:

> La traduction littérale est nécessairement néologique. Que cela surprenne encore, voilà qui est surprenant. Car toute grande traduction se signale par sa richesse néologique, même quand l’original n’en comporte pas. (Berman, 1985: 120—my italics)

This remark occurs in Berman’s discussion of Chateaubriand’s translation of Milton, a translation which precedes Baudelaire’s. Berman expands this comment immediately afterwards by adding that “La littéralité ne consiste pas seulement à violenter la syntaxe française ou à néologiser, elle est aussi dans le maintien, dans le texte de la traduction, de l’obscurité *inhérente* à l’original” (*ibid.*—my italics). This last remark I take to refer to the way a translator should aim to reproduce the opacity of the original discourse and, as we have just seen, Baudelaire’s translation strategy of standardizing does not exactly correspond to what Berman would have termed “écrire-étranger”. I am hereby not proposing to judge Baudelaire’s translation by contemporary (Bermanian) standards, but I am questioning Berman’s assessment of Baudelaire’s translations, which Berman defined as belonging to a small group of “great translations”, placing them together with Chateaubriand’s Milton and other world-famous versions:

> La Vulgate de Saint-Jérôme, la Bible de Luther, l’*Authorized Version* […] le Plutarque d’Amyot, les *Mille et une nuits* de Galland, le Shakespeare de Schlegel, l’*Antigone* de Hölderlin, le *Paradis perdu* de Milton de Chateaubriand, le Poe de Baudelaire, le Baudelaire de Stefan George : voilà une liste, nullement exhaustive, de grandes traductions. (Berman, 1990: 2)

Firstly, the great disadvantage of such classifications is that they end up fossilizing translations that are considered too great to be reworked—which, added to the point which I made at the beginning of this paper about the spell cast by Baudelaire’s myth on Poe’s survival in France, reduces the chances
of retranslation even further. Moreover, Berman’s categorization now seems untenable since, as we have already seen, Baudelaire’s overall technique of close and literal translation, which prompts Berman to place Baudelaire in this illustrious group in the first place, is not always consistent. Indeed, as our analysis of Baudelaire’s translations of Poe’s neologisms has shown so far, Baudelaire mostly standardizes and neutralizes where the source text neologizes, thus taking away from the source text’s “inherent obscurity”.

Furthermore, there are passages where Baudelaire opts for neologisms where there is no salient term in the source text to begin with. The following passage from “The Pit and The Pendulum” will illustrate this—it occurs at the beginning of the story, as the narrator describes the awakening from slumber and the passing from psychological into physical consciousness (the “second stage”):

It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. (Poe, 1978a: 682)

Il semble probable que si, en arrivant au second degré, nous pouvions évoquer les impressions du premier, nous y retrouverions tous les éloquents souvenirs du gouffre transmondain. (Poe, 1989: 647)

The neologism transmondain, composed by adding the prefix trans- to the already existing adjective mondain, features in the TLF in the above passage, thus making it a uniquely Baudelairean neologism (TLF 16: 497) which comes to translate a standard expression. This is an occasion, then, where a more literal alternative (e.g. le gouffre de l’au-delà) was conceivable and where Baudelaire increases the foreignness of his translation by adding a neologism where there is none in Poe’s text. The same happens in the following passage, which occurs at the beginning of “Hans Pfaall”:

[…] as I sauntered along the dusky streets, I revolved carefully over in my memory (Poe, 1996: 956-957)

Tout en flânant à travers les rues crépusculeuses de Rotterdam, je repassais dans ma mémoire les raisonnements […] (Poe, 1989: 152)

The TLF lists crépusculeux as “adj., rare” (TLF 6: 467) and gives only Baudelaire’s above extract, which means that the translator opted for a neolo-
gism to render the passage in a more marked version, where the source text does not contain any salient elements of the kind. Again, the issue here is not to evaluate the quality of this choice—indeed, many readers might find crépusculeux an excellent translation of dusky—but to point out that the strategy is rather different from Baudelaire’s habitual literalness.

More such paradoxical choices are found in Baudelaire’s neologizing translations of the word susceptibility, as in his translation of “The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar”:

It remained to be seen, first, whether, in such condition, there existed in the patient any susceptibility to the magnetic influence […] (Poe, 1978b: 1233)

Restait à savoir, d’abord, si dans un pareil état existait chez le patient une réceptibilité quelconque de l’influx magnétique […] (Poe, 1989: 887)

The TLF cites Baudelaire’s as the creator of the neologism réceptibilité, and gives extracts from the Curiosités esthétiques and the Histoires extraordinaires (TLF 14: 488). Given that Baudelaire had at his disposal nouns like réceptivité or susceptibilité, his choice here may again be described as a conscious attempt to “sound foreign” by using a self-made noun based on a loan from English. What is even more remarkable is that other occurrences of susceptibility are treated quite differently in Baudelaire’s translation of “Mesmeric Revelation”:

I am impelled, even in the teeth of a world of prejudice, to detail without comment the very remarkable substance of a colloquy, occurring between a sleep-waker and myself. I had been long in the habit of mesmerizing the person in question, (Mr. Vankirk,) and the usual acute susceptibility and exaltation of the mesmeric perception had supervened. (Poe, 1978b: 1030)

Je sens le besoin, en dépit de tout un monde de préjugés, de raconter, sans commentaires, mais dans tous ses détails, un très remarquable dialogue qui eut lieu entre un somnambule et moi. J’avais depuis longtemps

6. Though the relevant part of the Curiosités esthétiques in which réceptibilité occurs (“De l’essence du rire”, 1855) was published before the Histoires extraordinaires (1856), Baudelaire had published “Révélations magnétiques” twice before that, in 1848 and 1854. Baudelaire’s coining of the neologism therefore happened during his work on the translations, and is subsequently carried over in his critical prose writing, a point to which we return in the following section.

7. Richard also suggests suggestibilité, but this is dated by the TLF to 1890, long after Baudelaire was in need of it (TLF 15: 1066).
This is the second occurrence of *susceptibility* in “Mesmeric Revelation” (the previous instance features on the same page) and both are translated by Baudelaire with the other neologism *susceptibilité*, italicized in Richard’s and Le Dantec’s editions, possibly, as Richard states, “parce qu’il [Baudelaire] sent bien qu’il est impropre” (*ibid.*: 1411 note 3), though I would suggest that it is rather Baudelaire’s way of signaling that he is using a new word. Indeed in its use to designate a disposition for a hypnagogic state, the *TLF* lists only an 1805 example from Cuvier and Baudelaire’s example from “Révélation magnétique” (*TLF* 15: 1205), which still makes *susceptibilité* a neologism in Baudelaire’s time – and one which translates *susceptibility* perfectly well, though it increases its saliency. Thus, in the three cases where Poe uses the standard term *susceptibility*, Baudelaire either opts for a completely new self-coined word (*réceptibilité*) or for a relatively rare term (*susceptibilité*), while at the same time a very salient Poe neologism, namely *sleep-waker*, is here translated neutrally. The *OED*, which defines Poe’s *sleep-waker* as “a mesmerized or hypnotized person” lists it as a word coined in 1884 and thus omits Poe’s much earlier occurrence (*OED* IX: 102), and Baudelaire mistranslates it by *somnambule*, a mistake which is repeated several times throughout his text, which is surprising because *sleep-waker* and *sleep-waking* are terms which highlight Poe’s pronounced interest in altered mental states, of which Baudelaire is very likely to have been aware. Indeed in Poe’s “Marginalia”, the state of *sleep-waking* is described as populated by “a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy” (Poe, 1984a: 1383), and Mabbott refers to another passage in the “Marginalia” where Poe makes it explicitly clear that a *sleep-waker* is *not* a somnambulist.  

As Richard has also noticed, Baudelaire is thus mistaken in translating it as *somnambule*, instead of creating a term, or writing,

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8. In an issue of the “Marginalia” published in Graham’s magazine of March 1848, we find Poe ridiculing *The Record* for having published a version of “Mesmeric Revelation” while presenting it as a true story. Poe there complains that “It [*The Record*] had the impudence, also, to spoil the title by improving it to “The Last Conversation of a Somnambule”—a phrase that is nothing at all to the purpose, since the person who “converses” is *not* a somnambule. He is a sleep-waker—*not* a sleep-walker; but I presume that “The Record” thought it was only the difference of an I.” (Poe, 1984a: 1430)
as Richard suggests, “dormeur éveillé” to get Poe’s meaning across (Poe, 1989: 1411, note 2). Baudelaire’s choices can thus clearly not be said to be adapted to the genre of the tale or the type of text he was translating, nor can they said to be consistent, since in the same context (both “Valdemar” and “Mesmeric Revelation” are fantastic tales centered around hypnosis) we have just found two different neologisms where there weren’t any in the source text (réceptibilité and susceptibility for susceptibility), and a standard term (somnia) that (mis)translates a very salient source text word (sleep-waker).

These examples may suffice to affirm firstly, that Baudelaire’s translations of Poe’s neologisms can be grouped into two main strategies which are opposed to one another, and secondly, that his choice to neologize or not does not coincide with the type of text he is translating. We will now see that both strategies, however paradoxical they may be, did serve to liberate Baudelaire’s lexical creativeness beyond his work on the translations, as we proceed to examine cases where Baudelaire’s lexical creations became useful to him in his own writing.

### Recycled neologisms

We can begin this section by pointing to the same réceptibilité which Baudelaire created in his “Révélation magnétique,” and which also occurs in “De l’essence du rire” in the meaning of (general) predisposition: “L’essence très relevée du comique absolu en fait l’apanage des artistes supérieurs qui ont en eux la réceptibilité suffisante de toute idée absolue.” (Baudelaire, 1976 : 536) This is a first example of what I have termed self-reflexive imitation, where Baudelaire re-uses a neologism created for the translations in his own writing, and another example may confirm that often Baudelaire re-used not just the contents but also the actual words of his translations of Poe in his own writings. In “Le scarabée d’or” where Baudelaire introduces that extra measure of sensationalism which I have discussed elsewhere, by adding a sinister aspect to the atmosphere of this tale of ratiocination that is not inherent in the source text (see Wallaert, 2001), we find another Baudelairean neologism created specifically for this translation.

His countenance was pale even to ghastliness, and his deep-set eyes glared with unnatural lustre. (Poe, 1978b : 814)
Son visage était d’une pâleur spectrale, et ses yeux, naturellement fort enfoncés, brillaient d’un éclat surnaturel. (Poe, 1989: 669)

It would seem that Baudelaire read *ghostliness* where Poe has written *ghastliness*, which is not surprising since, as the *OED* indicates, *ghostly* and *ghastly* are both related to the Germanic word *gäst* (spirit, soul) from which the Dutch word *g(h)eest* (ghost) is also derived. As for Baudelaire’s translation, the *TLF* states that the word *spectral(e)*, which may not strike the modern-day reader as very bizarre, was introduced into French in 1856 via the publication of Baudelaire’s *Histoires extraordinaires* (*TLF* 15: 895). This case, where Baudelaire opts for a term that de-familializes and adds saliency to the target text passage in which it occurs, is quite different from the other occurrences of Poe’s *spectral*, which Baudelaire translated without using his neologism:

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (Poe, 1978a: 675)

Quand les yeux du prince Prospero tombèrent sur cette figure de spectre (Poe, 1989: 596)

The trees were dark in color, and mournful in form and attitude—wreathing themselves into sad, solemn, and spectral shapes that conveyed ideas of mortal sorrow and untimely death. (Poe, 1978a: 603)

Les arbres étaient d’une couleur noirâtre, lugubres de forme et d’attitude, se tordant en spectres moroses et solennels, traduisant des idées de chagrin mortel et de mort prématurée. (Poe, 1989: 562)

[...] the spectral and fiendish portraiture (Poe, 1978a: 695)

[...] ces images fantastiques et diaboliques (Poe, 1989: 657)

Given that the above standardizing translations for *spectral* were all published before the publication of “Le scarabée d’or”, it is likely that Baudelaire created the neologism *spectral* while translating “The Gold Bug”, which would imply that his translation choices became slightly more daring as he became a skilled and practiced translator of Poe. Moreover, this enduring translation practice seems to have rubbed off on his own writing, and in *Les Fleurs du Mal*, published a year after “Le scarabée d’or,” we thus
find the same neologism re-used, which confirms our initial suggestion that Baudelaire must have learned a lot from himself while translating Poe:

Il la terrasse au bord d’un gouffre séculaire,
Où, Lazare odorant déchirant son suaire,
Se meut dans son rêve le cadavre spectral,
D’un vieil amour ranci, charmant et sépulcral.
(Le Flacon)

*Spectral* is not the only adjective ending in the suffix -*al* which Baudelaire created: the *TLF* also gives the more salient *destinal* (*TLF* 7: 35) which Baudelaire used in a text on the Exposition universelle (Baudelaire, 1976: 588). In any case, though *spectral* here comes as an isolated example, some of Baudelaire’s neologisms that occur in other texts (most of which were written *after* he had translated the bulk of Poe’s work) are clearly inspired by his work on Poe.

In several of his works of literary criticism Baudelaire indeed uses neologisms which seem to come directly from his readings of Poe, including those texts which he did not officially translate. So, for instance, his use of the terms *didactisme* in the phrase “Didactisme en poésie et en peinture” (*ibid.*: 607) which features in the notes of his “Art philosophique” (composed around 1860—see *ibid.*: 1377, editor’s note) and *didactiquement* in “De l’essence du rire” (1855) (*ibid.*: 536), two neologisms which the *TLF* attributes to Baudelaire and which seem to stem directly from his intensive reading of Poe’s ideas on literary composition, in which Poe’s own neologism, *didacticism* (*OED* III: 332), occurs quite frequently. It is also noteworthy that a crucial discussion of “the heresy of the Didactic” occurs in Poe’s “The Poetic Principle”, an essay which, as previously indicated, Baudelaire partly incorporated in his “Notes Nouvelles sur Edgar Poe” and then repeated in his text on Gautier, there translating Poe’s expression as “l’hérésie de l’enseignement” (Baudelaire, 1976: 333, 1059). It will not have escaped the reader that we are here, moreover, looking at a term that became central to Baudelaire’s aesthetics (art for art’s sake, and no didactic purposes).9

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9. As Pichois indicates, the three texts in which Baudelaire elaborates his criticism of the didactic in poetry and art in general are those which are for a good part lifted from Poe: “Ce projet a occupé l’esprit de Baudelaire pendant près de dix ans, sous des titres divers qui recouvrent la même
Conclusions

Translating Poe’s work had a great impact on Baudelaire’s own creative oeuvre, not only as regards to ideas and techniques, but also, as we have just seen, with regard to the language which Baudelaire created while writing his translations. Baudelaire, who was a poet-in-the-bud when he worked on his Poe translations, can therefore be accurately described in Barnstone’s words as one of those poets for whom

[...] translations are intermediary texts that they have created between the foreign source and their own poems. Their translations, as intermediaries, become their real source and instructor. Through their translations, the poets have created their own intimate instructors in poetry. (Barnstone, 1993: 113)

Indeed, on the basis of what I have shown in this paper, it seems safe to state that Baudelaire’s work on the translations procured him greater lexical freedom and increased his lexical creativity. At the same time, the contradictions in Baudelaire’s translation choices also show that, though his texts are usually described and perceived as close translations, Baudelaire is not as literal a translator as he may appear at first sight. We have seen several unique instances where Baudelaire clearly put his personal mark on the translations, and when Poe is being utterly Poe, in such examples as sleep-waking or metaphysicianism, Baudelaire standardizes and neutralizes this Poe-ishness, while in other places, though there is no call from the source text, Baudelaire fabricates a Poe-ishness (or at least a foreignness) that was not there in the first place. This latter movement amounts to an appropriation of the source text, an appropriation which remains hidden behind a smokescreen of apparent literalness. This is the paradox of Baudelaire’s writing foreign, which contradicts his overall strategy of close translation. On a meta-textual and intertextual level, moreover, translation clearly had more important functions for Baudelaire than being simply the money-making activity that some of his biographers (and Baudelaire himself) have ascribed to it. For Baudelaire, translation was poetic rehearsal, a place in which he could freely practice the lexical creativity which he could then re-deploy in his other writings, in short, a source of self-reflexive imitation.

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