Staging identity: When poets read themselves and their translations

Larisa Cercel[*], **Leipzig University/Freiburg University**

ABSTRACT

The article deals with a new subject of translatological research: the translator's own reading, namely the public reading or performance of a translation by the translator themselves. This genre (Cercel 2020) is intimately related to the question of identity, given that the translator presents his or her own translation to the audience. That translation bears the inevitable mark of his or her individuality and moreover involves the affirmation of his or her identity as the author of the translated text. The translation-performance nexus in the translator's act of reading will be explored in the essay in terms of the parameters of (a), the voice, (b), the public persona and (c), the effect of the performance. Dealing with the phenomenon of 'voice' offers direct access to the identity of a translator because "the uniqueness of the person is represented by the voice. The voice is the expression of the person, and more importantly, it is the essence of the person" (Pajević, 2002, p. 240). The term "public persona" goes back to Carl Gustav Jung (1974) and refers to the outwardly displayed attitude of a person that serves as a vehicle for his or her adaptation — or conversely non-adaptation — to social conventions and expectations, and which is closely related to his or her self-image and identity. The "effect" (Fischer-Lichte, 2003) provides information about the audience's perception of and reaction to the given performance and the translator's identity statement contained therein. These parameters will be examined on the basis of a historical corpus, namely that of Paul Celan's readings of his poems and translations.

KEYWORDS

Identity, performance, translator's reading, Paul Celan, voice, public persona, effect, translatory audial-work, translatory performance-work.

> The possibilities for the representation of a self are infinitely various (Lee, 2009, p. 4).

1. Introduction

The "tremendous rise" in identity research (Owens, 2006, p. 228) in the Social Sciences and Humanities over the past decades has had a strong impact on Translation Studies (TS), where there has been a growing amount of literature exploring identity (Hostová, 2017). The breadth of approaches and publications, ranging from the translations of identity to the identity of translations, reflects the diversity of the phenomena constitutive of the identitarian complex, which are discussed on two levels: (1), on the macro level, i.e., the identity of a culture mediated by translation (Gentzler, 2008) in the field of tension between nation-building (Organ, 2019) and globalisation (Cronin, 2006), migration (Leonardi, 2019) and post-colonialism (Bandia, 2018) and (2), on the micro level, i.e., the identity of the translated author (Summers, 2017), of the translator (Lakner, 2020), and of the translation itself (Gil, 2015).

Of particular relevance to the present study is the identity of the translator, a topic that has occupied a central position in TS research and not just since the virulent and passionate polemic that arose in 2021 around the (in)appropriate translators of 'The hill we climb' by the American poet and activist Amanda Gorman (Toda Castán, 2022). Very diverse approaches and perspectives have become the subject of discussion in

[*] ORCID 0009-0002-4516-6904, e-mail: larisa.cercel@uni-leipzig.de

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6948

TS as they wrestle with defining the parameters of the issue. Identity constructs have been analysed, including on the basis of gender (Diachuk, 2017), social trajectory (Sapiro, 2013) and professional category (Sela-Sheffy & Shlesinger, 2011). Nowadays the biographies of translators (Baer, 2018) are considered a key to understanding their translation strategies (Awung, 2014). An extensive amount of research has been conducted in the last decades on the style (Baker, 2000) and the voice (Zhang, 2016) of individual translators. Both concepts function as core features of their peculiarity within the translator-author relationship.

Using style and voice as trademarks of the translator's individuality and identity, the translator is increasingly seen as a performer. The act of translation as performance is primarily understood as translational (self-)enactment on a textual level (Cercel, 2021). Translators try out the tone and voice(s) in the text to be translated "at the desk" (Kohlmayer, 2020, p. 87) and "in a quiet chamber" (Agnetta, 2021, p. 18), i.e., ultimately "without a stage" (Wechsler, 1998). Central to this conception of the translator's task is the idea of a special affinity between translational and theatrical performance. This fundamental thought was expressed early on in Translation Studies: "Literary translation definitely has something to do with acting," as Rainer Kohlmayer (2004, p. 27) reminded us in many of his publications, and not just in the case of narrative and dramaturgical texts where many characters and voices speak, but also in other literary genres. Numerous practising translators confirm the link between translating and theatrical acting: Ralph Manheim, the prominent American translator of German and French literature into English and the namesake of the 'PEN/Ralph Manheim Award' for translations, wrote the much-quoted sentence "translators are like actors: we speak lines by someone else" (as cited in Stavans, 1998, p. 176). Yotam Benshalom (2010, p. 47) reports on translating a theatre play with no fewer than 64 characters: "I was shouting, whispering and chattering along with my characters, looking for the best way to pronounce the source text lines, and then testing the pronunciation on my target text drafts. I was making plenty of noise for several weeks". This imagined auditory pre-staging of the play was intended to improve the quality of the translation: "I was using acting techniques for the sake of producing a better translation" (Benshalom, 2010, p. 48). Reading the text aloud (original and translation) is intended to create and pass on a living voice — Novalis' "written voice" (Kohlmayer, 2019) — which represents the centre of a very complex context: experienced translators (not only of dramaturgy) are always mentally 'staging' their text, 'acting' through it, and at the same time have to sit imaginatively in the audience in order to 'see', 'hear', 'feel' the effect of their translation.

However, such stagings and performances by translators do not just take place "behind closed doors" (Buschmann, 2018, p. 21). Nowadays, translators are increasingly present in public. Translators have become social actors who have the "willingness and ability to act" (Kinnunen & Koskinen, 2010, p. 6). They are (re)presented in films, advertisements and on social media (Abend-David, 2020). Furthermore, they stand *realiter* on stages and podiums, presenting their translations and themselves. Yet, there are hardly any studies on such performances, on the way in which translators use performance to (re)present what makes them unique. In the main, the existing research has only dealt with a very broad, metaphorical notion of translation. Canalès defines it as follows: "Performance can be considered as a form of translation which results in a new text, a reformulation that can represent identities"

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6948

(Canalès, 2021, p. 30) and analyses how two artists (the Canadian singer and composer Feist and the Mexican-American "artivist" Guillermo Gómez-Peña) "translate" their identities through performance.

The present article, devoted to the topic of translation and performativity, pivots in a different direction and puts a new subject of research in the spotlight: the translator's reading, namely the public reading, or indeed performance of a translation, by the translator himself. In such interactions with the (social) environment, the translator represents both the translated text and himself. Like any other artistic performance, the translator's reading can be defined and analysed as a highly complex intersemiotic act. The *mise-en-scène*, the body, the gestures and the voice of the translator enter into complex sets of relations, convey meaning and simultaneously make his personal identity something both visible and capable of being experienced by the public. Each element of the translation reading brings added value and offers additional information about the translator and his translation than a mere reading of the translation text can offer. In an earlier study (Cercel, 2020), I analysed a translator reading *in vitro*, more precisely: recordings of translations in the translator's original voice in a radio studio with a focus on the auditory performance and its informative value for understanding the translation and the translator's personality. In the present article, I deal with translator readings *in vivo*, i.e., with public performances of the translator in front of an audience. From the wide range of elements which such performances on the stage involves, I will focus here on three parameters that are particularly relevant to the question of translator identity, namely voice, public persona and effect. The definition of identity used here refers equally to the Latin etymology of the word — *idem* (same) and *identidem* (over and over again, repeatedly) — and to its relational nature. Identity encompasses — in a broad sense — categories people use to specify who they are and to locate themselves relative to other people (Owens, 2006, p. 207).

2. Presentation of the case study

There are several arguments in favour of choosing Celan's readings as a case study:

1. As a poet and translator, Celan has a special status. In 20th-century German literature, he is known as "the most important voice", indeed "perhaps the only one from this generation to be counted among world literature today" (Meyer-Kalkus, 2020, p. 885). He also undertook prominent and extensive translational work.

2. Moreover, the question of identity was central to Celan. His belonging to the Jewish community had a profound influence on him and it shaped his life in many ways. At the same time, Celan saw himself at least as fundamentally, if not more fundamentally, as a poet. For Celan, writing and existing are one and the same: "I must write, then I will live", he wrote to his friend Diet Kloos on 6 December 1949 (Celan, 2002, p. 79). Celan writes as a "poet of the German language who is a Jew" (Celan & Celan-Lestrange, 2001, p. 533, vol. 2) in the conviction that "there is nothing in the world for which a poet will give up writing, not even when he is a Jew and the language of his poems is German" (quoted in John Felstiner, 1995, p. 56). The language of his poetry remained German until his death, although Celan attached great importance to the fact that he

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6948

was not a German poet, but a poet of the German language (France-Lanord, 2004, p. 41). With very few exceptions, German was also the language into which he translated.

3. Celan attached equal importance to his translations as he did his poetry: “Perhaps the day will come” — Celan wrote to Hans Bender on 10 February 1961 — “when one realises that these works [the translations — L.C.] are also under the sign of the law under which I set out; all these are encounters, here too I have gone to language with my existence” (Neuhaus, 1984, p. 54). Celan considered translations to be an integral part of his oeuvre, and they related to his own texts in many ways. In translations he created “sketches of his self-understanding, of a self-portrayal” (Baumann, 1992, p. 106). Celan also used translations as a statement of identity: not infrequently (for example, in 1968 in Freiburg, the city of Martin Heidegger), he preferred to perform translations instead of his own poetry, on the grounds of his feeling of an inner impossibility concerning the presentation his own poems “in a country that has not paid off the war guilt and the debt to the Jewish people” (Neumann, 2018, p. 277).

4. Celan’s poetry and art of translation have a distinctive individuality, and this was particularly important to Celan. He already made this clear at his 1952 German debut at the Group 47 meeting in Niendorf. When Hans Werner Richter, the leader and mentor of Group 47, introduced Celan to a journalist: “And this is Mr Celan, he writes poems like... Well, tell us who you write poetry like,” Celan imitated Richter’s gesture and continued: “Well, hopefully like me.” (Hermann Lenz in Rychlo, 2020, p. 149) The singularity of Celan’s voice in text and performance is described in scholarship with terms created specifically for this purpose: his individual style of translating goes by the term “celanisieren” (e.g. Harbusch, 2005, p. 372), whereby he transformed everything into “Celan” when translating, and his performative-auditory presentations of poetry and translations are identified as having a distinctive “Celan sound” (Wagner, 2017). His highly individual staging, which was always a representation and an event, evoked strong and strongly opposed emotional reactions from the audience ranging from that of “scandalon” to that of “fascination”.

5. Celan had a particular affinity for recitation, performance and theatre. His recitation style was in the tradition of the Vienna Burgtheater, which was shaped by the recitalists Josef Kainz and Alexander Moissi. “Celan had trained in poetry recitation with Moissi’s records before the war” (Koch, 2018, p. 18) and thus in a performance style with high emotional valences. Celan had rehearsed this declamatory mode since his earliest years, when he exercised on German classical poetry and Shakespeare’s dramas with his mother and recited them with great success to “delighted” audiences (Chalfen, 1979, p. 70), later with an actress friend and as a constant visitor to German-language guest performances at Viennese theatres. Performance was very close to Celan’s heart; indeed, he performed within his circle of family and friends with such vocal, mimic and gestural persuasiveness that he obviously succeeded in bringing entire plays to life without any decoration: “Paul received the applause of the audience with visible satisfaction” (Chalfen, 1979, p. 70).

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6. Celan was highly aware of the unequal relationship between written and performed poems and translations, as well as the high impact of live performance (Novak, 2011). Despite his tense relationship with Germany, he continuously presented his poetic and translational work to German audiences by means of his own presence and voice. From 1952 until his death in 1970, he performed more than 50 times in 18 German cities, went to radio studios several times and twice to television for recordings. His public readings were always linked to the problem of identity. Already at his first appearance in 1952 in Niendorf, where his origin as an Eastern European Jew was clearly expressed in his way of reciting, he violated the vocal culture and politics of the time (Epping-Jäger, 2012). The way in which Celan stood against the ideas of his time about speaking and public performances is analysed below on the basis of the criteria of voice (section 3), public persona (section 4) and effect (section 5).

3. Voice

The "translator's voice" is a key translatological concept, and has been a productive focus of research for several decades (Taivalkoski-Shilov, 2013). This dynamic concept, possessed of considerable programmatic power, moreover, came into circulation as early as the 1990s and has since been studied extensively and from a wide variety of perspectives — primarily intratextual, paratextual, sociological (see the overview in Zhang, 2016). Here, however, we argue in favour of a performance-oriented approach to the phenomenon of voice, not on a textual level (Kohlmayer, 2020; Cercel, 2021), but in public performances of translators. More precisely, we focus on translator's readings. The guiding principle of this approach is the assumption that the aurally perceptible voice of the translator enables access to his identity or individuality: "There is, in fact, something global in each voice that strikes straight away, that gives you the feeling of a particular being, just like a physiognomy or handwriting. This voice is the voice of this particular person, not of someone else" (Tardieu, 1969, p. 55). This approach is highly relevant in the case of Celan, as it hits a nerve: the unique voice of the poet and translator Paul Celan was regarded as an identitarian, literary and historical statement.

The symbolic power of Celan's voice was already evident in his first public appearance at the conference of Group 47 in Niendorf on the Baltic Sea. In order to understand Celan's reciting voice, it is necessary to embed it in the social and literary context in which it was first heard. Around 1950, Nazi propaganda still weighed heavily in Germany's collective acoustic memory and prompted strong defensive reactions against emotional manipulation by means of pathetic rhetoric, voices and pitches. The most powerful authority in the German literary scene after the war — Group 47 — programmatically advocated the creation of a new literary language: raw and sparse, sober and precise, calling a spade a spade — this was to be the new generational style that resolutely turned away from the pompous rhetoric of (pre-)war literature. This new expectation affected not only the style of the texts, but also the way they were presented: voices that radiated coolness and monotony were successful (Koch, 2018). Neorealism was the buzzword of the literary avant-garde at the time. Against this backdrop, the acoustic-rhetorical performance of the young poet Celan completely surprised and alienated the audience, attuned as it was to sobriety: "A man named

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Paul Celan (no one had heard the name before) began to speak his poems, singing and very detached from the world" (Jens, 1961, p. 150).

There is no audio record of the Niendorf reading, so the reconstruction of this literary event is inevitably based on the memories of the audience. The young poet Celan recited some of his poems — and was laughed at; another member of the group — a professional speaker — had to repeat the reading. Walter Jens reported: "When Celan appeared for the first time, people said: 'Hardly anyone can listen to that', he read very pathetically. We laughed about it, 'He reads like Goebbels', said one person" (Arnold, 2004, p. 76). Celan also read "in a singsong tone like in a synagogue", according to the characterisation of Hans Werner Richter, the leader of Group 47 (Arnold, 2004, p. 75). Celan's poetry — including the *Todesfuge* — did not gain a lasting presence at this historic meeting; the value of one of the most important contributions to German post-war literature was not immediately apparent to this auditorium of literary critics.

The reasons for the disparaging remarks about Celan's reading are undoubtedly manifold. However, the decisive factor for the open rejection seemed to have been primarily the nature of Celan's performance, as testified to by listeners at the time: "Celan's 'seer-like' articulation" did not suit the style of the group, "his undeniable pathos seemed inappropriate" (Schroers, 1967, p. 384); "The saddest event was Paul Celan's reading, a misunderstanding that was due to the manner of his poetry performance" (T. Richter, 1997, p. 49). Researchers agree that it was primarily "Celan's manner of reading" (Buck, 1997/1998, p. 80) that triggered the laughter and the defamatory comments. The spiritus rector of Group 47, Hans Werner Richter, mentions another reason for his rejection: Celan's voice sounded "too bright, too pathetic" to him; "I don't like it", he admitted openly, indeed he could not "overcome his aversion to the voice" (H. W. Richter, 1997, p. 128). At the centre of the testimonies and reports about that literary meeting is always "the irritation that was triggered by Paul Celan's reading, his recitation and his voice" (Wagner, 2017, p. 285).

The letter that Celan wrote to Gisèle Lestrange on 31 May 1952 immediately after the Niendorf reading documents a very deliberate staging of the performance: Celan wanted to achieve a space "beyond these heads" through his meditative voice that appealed to memory, "where 'voices of silence' were still welcomed". The collective remembrance of what had happened, which the performance of the *Todesfuge* at the latest should have brought about, obviously did not materialise; Celan's intentional-rhetorical gesture remained a contested moment of opposition: "This voice, in this case mine, which did not slip through the words like others', but often stopped there in a meditation in which I could not participate fully and with all my heart, — this voice had to be disavowed, so that the ears of newspaper readers would not remember it..." (Celan & Celan-Lestrange, 2001, p. 28, vol. 1). That style of presentation, which wanted to be an identitarian statement, that voice with inherent symbolic power, not only failed to reach its listeners, it irritated them. It did to such an extent that they made a completely abstruse alignment of Nazi propagandist-in-chief Goebbels and the tone of the synagogue. Celan's manner of reading in Niendorf was a massive offence against the vocal culture and politics of the time (Epping-Jäger, 2012). His performance style remained "a scandal" (Meyer-Kalkus, 2014) even in the years that followed that memorable debut, and his voice was always remembered as a "vocal event" (*Stimmereignis*) (Koch, 2019, p. 82).

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4. Public persona

An individual's persona is the image of their character, nature or status that they present to other people. Carl Gustav Jung, who made the persona a specialised term in psychology, points to its theatrical origin: "it was originally the *mask* that an actor wore and which denoted the role in which the actor appeared" (Jung, 1974, p. 172). Thus, the persona is basically "nothing 'real'" (Jung, 1974, p. 173), but rather the figure in the guise of which one presents oneself in social space. Basically, one endeavours to present an image of one's own identity and self-image that corresponds to one's own ideals. Ultimately, however, the public persona serves to adapt to the social environment. Outwardly, one displays behaviour that corresponds to applicable values, norms and expectations. There are usually conflicts between the public persona and the real character or nature of a person; behind the affixed persona-mask there are often contradictions with one's the private life and one's convictions (Jung, 1974, pp. 211–232). Public self-presentations do not necessarily show one's own self. This can lead to ambiguity and mistrust of the portrayed image among recipients: Is that image the true nature of the presenter or possibly just an appearance? Ultimately: "What is person, what is persona?" (Meyer-Kalkus, 2020, p. 32)

The persona of translators has been little studied in Translation Studies although Sela-Sheffy (2008) examined the collective self-images of Israeli literary translators as a professional category, examining which principal self-images emerged from their self-presentational discourses in order to become recognised and established in their profession as a distinctive source of cultural capital. Yet, there are hardly any studies on the persona of individual translators in their public appearances. Occasionally, however, the term (e.g., as "stage persona", "public-proof persona" in Canalès 2021, p. 38, p. 39 and p. 40) appears in a broader context of describing the way artists (not translators) present or 'translate' their identity in the public sphere.

Paul Celan prepared his public readings very carefully in terms of staging. He had clear ideas about his performances and always communicated his expectations and conditions for the materiality of his performances to the organisers in advance by letter. He occasionally rejected proposed reading rooms, such as in Göttingen in 1963, where he refused to read in the Paulinerkirche, which at the time served as the Auditorium maximum, because the former ecclesiastical purpose of this room precluded his performance in it (Bernhard Böschenstein in Rychlo, 2020, p. 192). The space and acoustics were rigorously scrutinised by Celan himself before the reading. He insisted emphatically on minimalist décor on the stage or podium: just a table (not a lectern), a glass of water on it (Celan & Wurm, 1995, p. 31), nothing "floral or even just herbal" (Bernhard Böschenstein in Rychlo 2020, p. 195). His constant and resolute requirement to read without a microphone, regardless of the size of the room and the size of the audience, is also well known (Neumann, 2018, p. 313, 323; Bernhard Böschenstein in Rychlo 2020, p. 192) since, "in doing so, one gains immediacy towards the listeners", according to Celan in a letter to Franz Wurm (Celan & Wurm, 1995, p. 31). His performance continuously followed the same ritual: he read "always in the same manner and posture. One hand held the book or manuscript, the other supported his head. Sometimes the reader looked up and understood individual verses as an address to the listeners. Otherwise no movement" (Mayer, 1971, p. 186).

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This was repeated at every reading: “He sat there, his head resting in his hand, turning the pages, one poem after the other, reading quietly, no explanation for the audience, and when he had read enough, he stopped and walked away” (Mayer, 1997, p. 300). Occasionally Celan read further poems after long and hearty applause. Questions from the audience were explicitly unwelcome; he never commented on his poems and translations during his public appearances. Even after the readings, he usually refused to enter into closer contact with his audience.

Celan also carefully prepared the content of the readings. Which texts he read and in what order was rigorously thought through: “He favoured certain arrangements that favoured a revealing structure, making the polyphonic in rhythms and tones obvious” (Baumann, 1992, p. 60). Celan used this not least as a statement about his Jewish identity. Celan ended the 1967 reading in Freiburg with Martin Heidegger in the front row — very mindful of message and effect — with the verses: “...a crystal of breath, / your irrefutable / testimony”. The “tension” of this conclusion “lasted” (Baumann, 1992, p. 67), but Celan’s hope for “a coming word in the heart” from Heidegger, who had declared his support for Nazi politics in his 1933 Freiburg rectorate speech, was not fulfilled. When this identitarian testimony was not honoured with a retraction or even a word of regret, Celan read translations in Freiburg a year later. He preferred to perform translations instead of his own poetry, feeling an inner impossibility concerning the presentation of his own poems “in a country that has not paid off the war guilt and the debt to the Jewish people” (Neumann, 2018, p. 277). Celan chose the translations carefully and with a clear reference to the question of identity. He read Alexander Blok (1880–1921), Sergei Yesenin (1895–1925) and Ossip Mandelstam (1891–1938) in his own translations. He felt a special affinity with Russian poetry, which was intellectually, literarily and spiritually influential for Celan. “In the mystery of the encounter”, as Celan says at a central point in his Büchner Prize speech (GW 3, p. 198), he was particularly close to the poet and man Ossip Mandelstam. The confrontation with ‘Brother Ossip’ (the title of a Celan poem), who played a significant role in Celan’s poetic self-discovery and identity, was acute, intense and deeply formative for Celan.

In contrast to the deliberate minimalism of the stage set and the lack of gestures was Celan’s voice. Celan paid particular attention to it during his public performances, indeed it seemed to be the main medium of his communication with the audience. Numerous eyewitnesses to his readings report in particular on his voice and manner of reading: “Paul Celan read from his poems with calm intonation and careful articulation” (Gershom Schocken in Rychlo, 2020, p. 329). “He used to prepare his public readings meticulously: he considered the entries and pauses for breath as well as the selection and sequence of the poems and the rhythmic coordination. He did equal justice to the vocal and the voiceless” (Baumann, 1992, p. 53). Listening to Celan provided the audience with a (not simply auditory) experience of a special kind: “At times one became a witness to how the voice emerged from silence, how invention and resistance gave rise to exciting tensions. The union of sound and expression became an immediate experience — experiences that one had expected and yet could always be surprised by” (Baumann, 1992, p. 53).

The speaker can stylise their voice and manner of speaking to a certain extent, just as they can do it with posture, gestures and clothing. They have a range of options at their disposal: they can consciously change a variety of parameters of speech to meet

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audience expectations and they may choose to incorporate predetermined role models into the construction of the specific vocal persona (Meyer-Kalkus, 2020, p. 32–34). In scholarly literature, this phenomenon is summarised under the term “acoustic mask”, which was coined by Elias Canetti (Meyer-Kalkus, 2001, pp. 318–336). Did Paul Celan put on such an acoustic mask in his public readings? Did he use his voice differently in readings and in everyday conversations? Did he recite his poems and translations in a markedly different style than he spoke to friends or in interviews, for example? Surprisingly, the answer is hardly, or not significantly differently. Celan’s characteristic vocal aesthetic is unmistakable here and there: the meditation of words in which Celan wanted to dwell during his recitation in Niendorf (Celan & Celan-Lestrange, 2001, p. 28, vol. 1) is also present in his everyday discourse: “In private conversation,” recalls a friend, “he spoke in a low voice, clearly accentuating, as if trying to formulate, groping for words and sometimes sinking into silence, smiling shyly and melancholically” (Wallmann, 1971, p. 83). The (overly) clear diction, the expressive, ceremonial way of speaking, the full awareness of the function of pauses and cadences, the long vocal arches, the elongation of individual sounds, syllables and words — these characteristics of Celan’s delivery are also easily recognisable in the interview with SDR editor Karl Schwedhelm from the spring of 1954. The author of the feature “The Master’s Voice. Radio Voices of German Writers after 1945” remarks conclusively: “He answers in a selectively friendly manner, in a distinguished, sustained way of speaking that is not far removed from the high tone of his poetry recitation” (Koch, 2018, p. 20). The fact that Paul Celan did not make any significant distinction between his performance voice (of poetry or translations) and his colloquial orality (in private conversations and interviews), and that the trademarks of his vocal persona have remained intact over the years, apart from some variations in intensity, are useful indications for deepening Celan’s poetic and translatological work: poet and translator are in a continuum with Paul Celan the man. The perpetual unity of the style of presentation shows that these three dimensions of his personality are deeply interconnected, almost like communicating tubes. Unlike fellow poets such as Ingeborg Bachmann, for example, who make an obvious vocal-prosodic distinction between public reading and everyday communication (Meyer-Kalkus, 2017), the two flow into one another in Celan’s case. In the public sphere, he presented himself in the mode of authenticity. He showed himself as he was and as he thought. In the case of Celan, persona is person (cf. Meyer-Kalkus, 2020, p. 32).

Celan’s consistent rejection of loudspeakers at his public readings, which he saw as an encounter with the audience, and which could therefore only take place in the mode of strict immediacy of presence and voice, should also be understood within this context: “Readings also meant encounters for the poet — not least self-encounters, corresponding to those he had designed and experienced in his poems” (Baumann, 1992, p. 61). For the most part, he did not allow radio recordings and preferred to travel to the studio and read for the radio: “These details are important because they bear witness to his strict conception of the poem as a word spoken to others here and now, a word that belongs to everyone who is present in this moment, but not simultaneously to other, invisible or later listeners. For he would have seen this as a betrayal of the secret of the encounter, which should be unique, non-transferable and not repeatable at will. The reading specially planned for radio also obeyed a different law” (Bernhard Böschenstein in Rychlo, 2020, p. 192).

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5. Effect

A public reading is characterised by the physical co-presence of the speaker and the audience. In this — just as in a theatrical performance — the processes of staging and perception are directly related to each other: the performer stages the reading, then the 'effect' provides information about the audience's perception and reaction to the given performance and the translator's identity statement contained therein. Perception and reaction are multidimensional: the audience members "develop a feeling for the spatial dimensions of their surroundings, sense the atmosphere of a room, experience time in a certain way — with greater or lesser intensity" (Fischer-Lichte, 2003, p. 16); they react — physiologically and affectively — to the "charisma" (Fischer-Lichte, 2003, p. 16) of the actors, which they experience as negative or positive, "sense the power and energy emanating from them, and thus feel their own bodies in a specific way" (Fischer-Lichte, 2003, p. 16). They react directly to the relationship that the performer endeavours to establish with them. The spectators enter into this relationship in a differentiated way, in that their expectations of the performer, performance and artistic statement are disappointed, fulfilled or surpassed; they react to the speaker's verbal and physical actions with actions of their own: with comments, standing up, applause, etc., (Fischer-Lichte, 2003, p. 12).

Celan's public performances provoked strongly opposing reactions. On the one hand, there was the aforementioned unmissable (or rather unoverhearable) rejection at his debut reading in Niendorf, where the public expressed irritation with sharply negative comments. His reading in Stuttgart on 21 March 1970 was also met with a scandalised reception. Celan wrote to Ilana Shmueli that there was "noticeable resistance from the audience" (Celan & Shmueli 2004, p. 135, letter dated 6 April 1970). An eyewitness reports that the audience showed "impatience, arrogance, disinterest", indeed "many left unabashedly during the reading" (Mayer, 1997, p. 300). Celan's concept of identity was not well received in Stuttgart, indeed it clashed considerably with the audience's expectations: the audience "talked while Celan read and spread his fingers on the tabletop. One of them stood up, walked out and let the door snap loudly into the lock. Then a motorbike was started up outside, rattling and hissing in the street until it finally drove away" (Hermann Lenz in Rychlo, 2020, pp. 149–150).

On the other hand — and this was more the rule — audience members reported intense experiences and deep emotions at Celan's readings. At the 1967 reading in Freiburg, the audience was "visibly captivated" (Neumann, 2018, p. 318). In 1968, in Frankfurt, they listened to Celan "spellbound" (Reichert, 2020, p. 108). In 1969, in Jerusalem, the "certainty and power of expression" are said to have immediately made the audience sit up and take notice: "this captures the listener irresistibly and makes him surrender completely to this voice" (Israel Chalfen in Rychlo, 2020, p. 326). As previously stated concerning his performance in Tübingen, Celan succeeded in transforming the room and the audience within a very short space of time, where "from the very first moment" there was "a poetic atmosphere, one was in a world of poetry" (Mayer, 1997, p. 300). In 1963 in Frankfurt, he "created a completely unique acoustic space that had nothing to do with an ordinary poetry reading" (Reichert, 2020, p. 42), the atmosphere at the 1969 reading in Tel Aviv "was reminiscent of the prayers in the synagogues" (Gershom Schocken in Rychlo, 2020, p. 329), and he was even able to transfigure the space and the audience in private readings: "The moment he begins,

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my small room becomes a room, an aura emerges, enveloped by an inviolable silence" (Reichert, 2020, p. 53). "A great silence in the hall" prevailed after the 1968 Frankfurt reading in in the midst of student protest movements: "The young people must have sensed that something completely different was being discussed here than what they were rebelling against" (Reichert, 2020, p. 108). At the famous 1967 Freiburg reading, "the listeners did not move away from the poetry, even after they had long since left the hall" (Baumann, 1992, p. 67). Martin Heidegger and other colleagues and close associates of Celan also left "wordlessly" after the reading: "A certain shyness to speak could be observed, the reverberation of the poems had such a powerful effect that a pause for breath of indeterminable duration held back any utterance" (Baumann, 1992, p. 67).

Whether Celan's performances were met with opposition or consensus, one thing seems to unite all audience reactions, namely the conviction of the authenticity of the person. The fundamental question of whether the person who shows something of themselves in public is really that person, what is ultimately "genuine or even authentic in the web pattern of the performance and what is staged and artificial" (Meyer-Kalkus, 2020, p. 34), received a clear answer in his case: the performer Celan stood up for what he presented with what he was as a person. A co-organiser of the 1967 reading in Freiburg reported that he had "spoken to many very differently structured people (from enthusiasts to notorious troublemakers) about it and was amazed at the unanimity regarding the effect: very impressive and a man who stands completely behind what he says" (Neumann, 2018, p. 318). Celan seems to have left this impression on audiences continuously since the beginning of his reading activities. As early as 1953, an audience member who attended Celan's reading in the vestibule of a Stuttgart villa expressed surprise that, in his case, "poems and person were one" (Hermann Lenz in Rychlo, 2020, p. 148). "He writes as he is, I said to myself and wondered" (Hermann Lenz in Rychlo, 2020, p. 148). The effect of the person and the effect of the recited texts in the mode of authenticity reinforced each other and enabled the audience to have intense affective and aesthetic experiences, including the awareness of participating in a distinctive, memorable performance: Celan's verses and translations are said to have brought "something" close that one "could not name", but which appeared as "something special": "He looks behind the clunky, earthly, simple, banal and trivial, I said to myself" (Hermann Lenz in Rychlo, 2020, p. 148). "Probably only a few understood a few things", reported another audience member, "but the conviction that something important was being negotiated was all the stronger" (Neumann, 2018, p. 318). Extraordinary things happened between the speaker Celan and the audience.

6. Conclusions

Having lived in a time of the collective madness that was Nazism, the poet and translator Paul Celan wanted to make heard a voice that stood 'against'. The aim of this article has been to hear and to make heard the singularity of Celan's voice as it manifests itself in his public readings and to establish the framework for the analysis of identity in translators' readings as a new translatological topic of study.

The study of Paul Celan's public readings offers a revealing approach to the identity of the poet and translator. The familiarity with Celan's textual presence and the deep

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knowledge that one has gained through years of dealing with his writings become an essential expansion through the confrontation with the materiality of his presence on stage and in particular with his voice. While the speech of Celan's style in poetry and translation as the quintessence of his unmistakable individuality has a certain abstractness, it is supported sensorially by Celan's performances: The unmistakable Celan sound immediately catches the ear. Even the "legend that portrays him as a lonely, world-shy anachoret" (Rychlo, 2020, p. 358) must be nuanced by his presence in public. Celan, who was otherwise considered a "rather withdrawn person" (Rychlo, 2020, p. 357), stood on stage and appeared in his readings in front of audiences that sometimes numbered in the hundreds. Fully aware of the "transformative power of performance" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008), Celan conveys his poetic and translational work as well as his own identity to the audience through the quite differentiated, complex setting of a public reading. In a letter to Ilana Shmueli dated 6 April 1970, shortly before his death, he reports on the profound significance of the readings for himself: "my poems create for me momentarily, precisely when I read them, the possibility of existence, of standing" (Celan & Shmueli, 2004, p. 135).

The way in which the ontological register intersects with society in poet and translator identity has been examined in this essay using the criteria of voice, public persona and effect. The analysis of its manifestation in public readings represents a new, performance-oriented perspective amidst the very diverse and growing literature on identity in TS. This assumes that the written and the performed translation are not only "two parallel modes of realising the text, both of which are amenable to practices of 'reading'" (Novak, 2011, p. 65), but that their *consideration together* brings a decisive added value for the understanding of translator identity. In this sense, the present essay argues for the extension of research to the translators' public readings and — in view of the special significance of the voice — to original audio recordings. The digitisation of translators' readings that take place on public stages or in recording studios enables the constitution of a valuable parallel — visual and auditory — corpus. In this way, the 'translatory performance-work' [*translatorisches Performance-Werk*] and 'translatory audial-work' [*translatorisches Hörwerk*] (Cercel, 2020) of translators can be used by researchers alongside their 'scriptural-work' [*Schriftwerk*] to trace their 'identity'.

Acknowledgements/Funding

This article was written during a research stay at La Sapienza University in Rome as a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

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https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6948