

**Contribution to the themes:**

***Lost in translation***

***Reflexions on some lost competencies***

**Textual analysis and avoiding traps in translation:  
Case studies of manuscripts for openings and endings  
in Paul Valéry's poetry**

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Now that the debate between *targeteers* and *sourcerers*, between prioritising form or meaning is finally recognised for what it is, *un faux débat*, we can concentrate on what I called the *formal content* in a recent publication in Belgium. Translation is also an incomparable school of writing and the translation of poetry in particular determines the extent of one's mastery of such writerly skills in an essentially bicultural framework.

We will deal with five vital questions in a set of case studies.

First and foremost, the one that terrorises most translators (and others) is: What is your starting point? In other words, how do you define it – while remembering that *defining* places from where to start inevitably leads to *changing* places?

Secondly, and this one is derived from the former: What is our definition of Valéry's poetry? A good starting point for those in doubt here can always be to begin by indicating what it is not. Obviously the trace of such a study can be found in Valéry's notebooks and the manuscripts of his poems.

Thirdly, what strategies can be used to open up the "genetic code" of the poetic text?

Fourthly, what essential traps are to be avoided, and what procedures are to be followed when translating sound and meaning?

Last, but not least, what strategies shall we use to account for *le restant*, *le residu* – or what is left out or left over?



**Dr David ELDER** was born and educated in Western Australia. He completed his doctorate in France where he lived for 20 years. During this time he lectured in French and English at the University of Nice and the College of Education on the French Riviera. In 1975, he translated a short text by Marcel Brion of the Académie française while teaching translation at both Maîtrise and CAPES level.

Dr ELDER is currently coordinator of Language Studies at Edith Cowan University and his recent university publications in France include articles in the areas of philosophy, politics, poetry analysis and translation theory and practice as well as education theory.

In 2008, he received a Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning (Australian Learning and Teaching Council) « for the development and use of innovative resources to promote semi-autonomous learning in large, mixed-ability French language classes » He gave a lecture in 2007 at a conference on philosophy and translation at the University of

Strasbourg. In 2008, he presented papers on translation and poetry in France, translation and form in Belgium. He is currently working on the manuscripts of Paul Valéry.