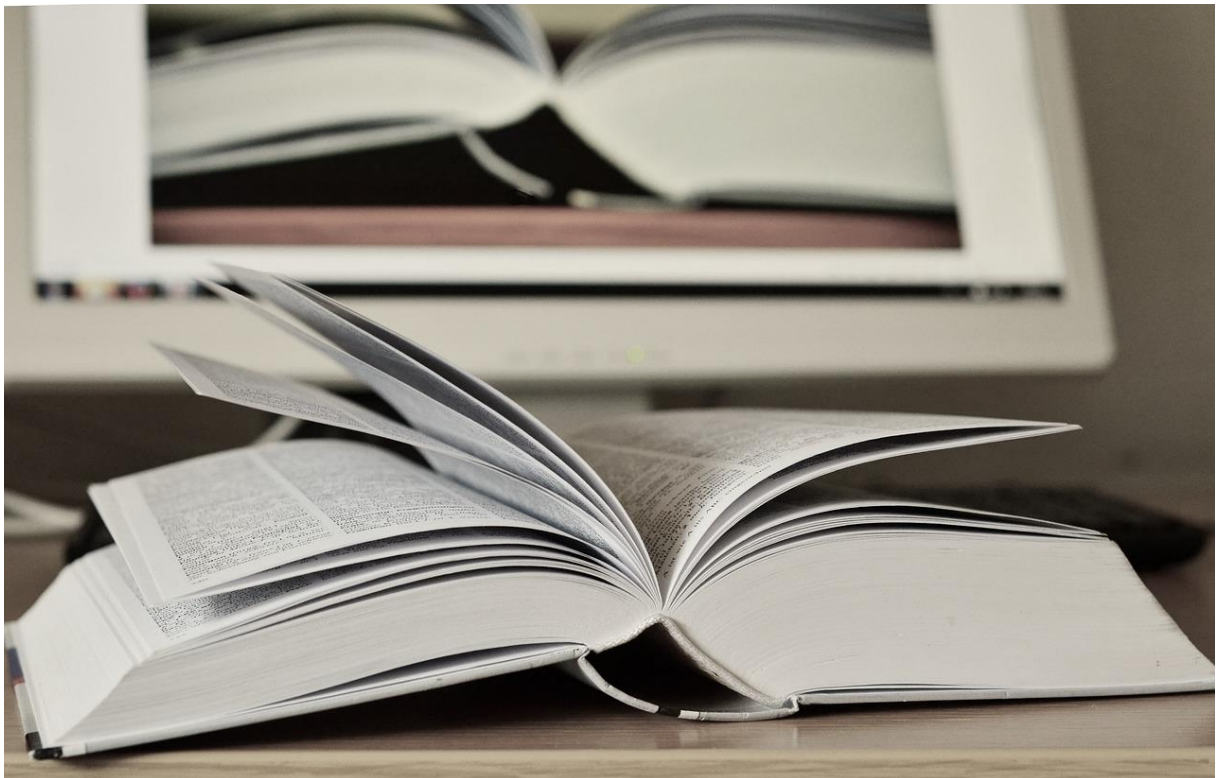


# Chronotopos

A Journal of Translation History



## Retranslation Practices in Europe through the Centuries

Zsuzsa Csikai, Adrienn Gulyás & Judit Mudriczki (Hrsg. / eds.)

2/24

# Retranslation Practices in Europe through the Centuries

Guest edited by Zsuzsa Csikai, Adrienn Gulyás, Judit Mudriczki

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**Zsuzsa Csikai, Adrienn Gulyás and Judit Mudriczki**

## Retranslation Practices in Europe through the Centuries

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Zsuzsa Csikai, Adrienn Gulyás, Judit Mudriczki

## Introduction: Retranslation Practices in Europe through the Centuries

Retranslation Studies emerged as a distinct field of research within Translation Studies in the past three decades. A focused academic discussion of the retranslation of literary works started in 1990 when Bensimon and Berman edited a special issue of *Palimpsestes* on ‘Retraduire.’ Since then, retranslation as a cultural practice has steadily attracted attention, the notion as an entry was added in widely-used handbooks like the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* or the *Handbook of Translation Studies*, and it has also become a stimulating topic of monographs (DEANE-COX 2014), edited collections (CADERA & WALSH 2017, BERK ALBACHTEN & GÜRÇAĞLAR 2019) and thematic issues of such academic journals as *Target* (2015) or *The Translator* (2020). Even if it has reasonably received severe criticism for prompting invalid and heuristic methods of research and argumentation, the “retranslation hypothesis” by Chesterman (2000) has also fueled academic discourses on the dynamics of retranslation over the centuries (PETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023). Since 2013, an international conference series called “Retranslation in Context” has offered both formal and informal occasions for scholars to meet and exchange their ideas on the topic. The series started at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, and further events were organized at Ghent University (2017), Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid (2019), Károli Gáspár University, Budapest (2022) and most recently at Ege University, Izmir (2024).

The present issue of *Chronotopos* intends to expand discussions on retranslation with a historical European perspective drawing on both textual and contextual analysis. After a theoretical proposal about a new and innovative conceptualization of retranslation, the first two articles address the translation history of English classics in Central Europe with case studies from Hungary and Poland, while the last two offer insights into retranslation practices of Russian literary works into Dutch.

In the lead article “Retranslation as Re-accentuation,” Kris Peeters addresses a theoretical concern when he argues that Bakhtin’s idea<sup>1</sup> of “re-accentuation” can be a productive way of conceptualizing retranslation because it is void of the methodological pitfalls of the more privileged “retranslation hypothesis.” Re-accentuations, in the Bakhtinian sense, mean a diachronic series of dialogical re-interpretations, against diverse linguistic and socio-ideological backgrounds, of the source material translated.

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<sup>1</sup> In the current journal issue, instead of using Cyrillic characters, all Russian names will be transliterated according to Library of Congress system (ALA-LC), but without the diacritical marks above the letters.

Peeters claims that retranslations, then, can be considered as re-accentuations to the second degree: retranslators re-accent the source material, yet by doing so they also re-accent earlier translations already present in the target context that had previously re-accented the same material in a certain way. To illustrate his argument, the author cites a selection of illustrative examples from translations and retranslations in several languages (Dutch, French, English, Italian etc.), of literary prose by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce or Flann O'Brien.

The first case study on Central European translation practices, "Playboy, Hero, Champion: Retranslations of J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in Hungary" by Zsuzsa Csikai focuses on drama translation and takes a keen interest in the Hungarian translation of the idiosyncratic Irish English dialect, the use of which shows resistance to British cultural domination in the play. The author argues that following the first translation of the play by Tamás Ungvári in 1960, its 21st century retranslations commissioned by various stage directors answered the challenges of dialect translation in different ways, yet all three retranslations eventually strengthened the canonical status of the play in Hungary.

The author of the second Central European case study, Izabela Szymańska, examines a recent Polish retranslation of Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* (2018) against the background of its earlier Polish renditions in the paper entitled "Style and Status in Retranslating Children's Classics: on the history of Polish Translations of Kipling's *Just So Stories*." Following an overview of the history of Polish translations of the book and their publications, the author examines the re-translator's approach in terms of tendencies that can be observed on the Polish market of children's books as regards retranslations of canonical titles. The case study sheds light on the changing approach to the translation of Kipling's style (distinctly poetic, emulating oral tradition) as well as to the decision to preserve the original illustrations as integral part of the book. While translations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century tended to neutralize Kipling's style and disregard features that did not conform to Polish literary conventions, e.g. alliteration, the most recent translation intends to provide readers with a creative and innovative rendering in Polish of the unconventional use of language in the source text. These changes in approach are interpreted in connection with historical changes in the hierarchy of functions ascribed to children's literature in the Polish context marking a shift in focus from educational and pedagogical functions of children's literature to entertaining and imagination-stimulating functions. At the same time, the author also calls attention to the emergence of erudite retranslations featuring explanatory paratexts, which is a reflection of the growth of the status of the original as a canonical text.

The second part of the journal issue focusing on the translation of Russian canonical authors in Western Europe starts with Gaëtan Regniers' article "From Text to Tree: a Stemmatological Approach to Retranslation" in which the author proposes a new methodology to assess retranslations of serialized fiction in nineteenth and twentieth century newspapers. His study focuses on a corpus of translated Russian literature published in Dutch newspapers between 1835 and 1990 and compares the available Dutch versions of Leo Tolstoy's short story "Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet"

(“God Sees the Truth but Waits”). The aim of his exploration is to better understand retranslation in periodicals by first identifying and mapping the phenomenon, then examining the motivations for newspapers to reissue the same translated story. The author applies stemmatology, also known as Lachmannian text analysis, a genealogical method that was originally designed to classify and reconstruct manuscripts, but he argues that this model can be instrumental to distinguish different copies based on minor differences. He proposes a typology based on the different varieties of reprinting as they emerge in periodicals. This model distinguishes between reprinting, re-editing, revising, and rewriting and favors a sociological approach: it reflects the perspective of actors assuming that interventions were made to cater the text to the needs of the readers. He argues that his approach, which combines text-genetic techniques and a refined retranslation typology, serves as a useful method in analysing the phenomenon of retranslation published in periodicals.

In the last article “Canonization and Renaming: the Rationale behind Retranslating Russian Book Titles in Dutch,” Piet Van Poucke investigates the reasons for keeping or modifying titles of first translations in literary translations from Russian into Dutch. A corpus of Dutch titles of translated and retranslated Russian works between 1789 and 2020 is explored to trace where retranslators changed the title in comparison with the previous translation. Title translation proves to be a fascinating field of research because it is a target culture oriented activity of hybrid authorship that implies the application of non-literal translation strategies by not only translators but also editors and publishers who often intend to manipulate readers for both ideological and commercial purposes. While studying the Dutch translation of titles by canonical authors like M. Bulgakov, A. Chekhov, F. Dostoevskii, N. Gogol, I. Goncharov, N. Leskov, B. Pasternak, A. Pushkin, M. Saltykov, L. N. Tolstoi or I. Turgenev, the author finds that most works in his database show various types of title adaptation, and the most common retranslation strategy is that of foreignisation, which intends to find a more literal Dutch counterpart to titles than previous translations with clearly seductive functions to attract readership.

The book reviews section adds further insights into retranslation practices in Europe from three different angles. First, the volume *Perspectives on Retranslation* offers a wide scale overview of academic discourses on retranslation studies as it shares a selection from the papers presented at the first two conferences of the “Retranslation in Context” series organized at Boğaziçi University in 2013 and 2015. Second, the Hungarian volume *Klasszikus művek újrafordítása* manifests the diversity of both academic approaches and retranslation practices in Central Europe, and its review in English provides even non-Hungarian scholars with the opportunity to see current academic and professional trends in the region. Third, the most recent retranslation of the old English poem *Beowulf* by Maria Dahvana Headley is reviewed to showcase professional concerns from the retranslator’s point of view.

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**Articles / Artikel / Articles**

**Valérie Dullion**

## Building “translating institutions” in nineteenth-century national contexts

### The proto-history of institutional translators as a professional group

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#### **Abstract**

*This article looks at the professionalisation of institutional translation in multilingual countries in the nineteenth century, i.e. before the first academic training and research institutions were established in the field of translation. First of all, the article presents a case study focusing on the Swiss federal institutions from 1848 to 1914. Several types of sources from digitised public archives are used to examine specifically to what extent, how and why institutional translation became professionalised in that context, and to put together a profile for nineteenth century federal translators. Following this, the findings of the case study are linked with elements of translator history that can be derived from existing research on other multilingual countries. Several thematic clusters are identified which can be suggested as a basis for developing comparative and relational approaches. The article highlights the relevance of such approaches in contributing to a history of translation knowledge and practice, as well as their potential for stimulating theoretical reflection on institutional translation as a professional occupation.*

*Keywords:* translation history; institutional translation; translators; professionalisation; Switzerland; archives.

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Valérie Dullion

## Building “translating institutions” in nineteenth-century national contexts

### The proto-history of institutional translators as a professional group

#### **Abstract**

*Institutional translators were employed in several multilingual countries in the nineteenth century, well before the first academic training and research institutions were established in the field of translation. Looking at the history of these translators can enrich our understanding of both the history of the countries in question and the professionalisation of translation. This article presents a case study focusing on the Swiss federal institutions from 1848 to 1914. Sources from digitised public archives are used to examine to what extent, how and why institutional translation became professionalised in that context, and to put together a profile for nineteenth century federal translators. Following this, the findings of the case study are linked with elements of translator history that can be derived from existing research on other multilingual countries. Various thematic clusters are identified, which can be used as a basis for developing comparative and relational approaches. The article highlights the relevance of such approaches in contributing to a history of translation knowledge and practice, as well as their potential for stimulating theoretical reflection on processes of professionalisation.*

#### **Introduction**

Working in a multilingual institution is today a standard occupation in the translation profession (KOSKINEN 2011). European and international organisations, in particular, employ institutional translators with well-defined skills and profiles, often in full-time salaried positions. This professional group coexists and partly overlaps with others, such as translators working in the language industry, freelance translators, literary translators, sworn translators, and various categories of interpreters.

Institutional translators emerged as a professional group following the creation of supranational and international organisations after the Second World War (see e.g. European Commission 2021) and alongside the development of academic training and research in translation (LAMBERT 2013; BALLIU & FROELIGER 2022: 13-18). The European Union currently employs the largest number of these language professionals. However, they had nineteenth-century predecessors that were working on a national level, i.e., in states that adopted a policy of bi/multilingualism at that time. In Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, the Habsburg monarchy, and Finland, there were, by the end of the nineteenth century, a number of translator positions in the civil service (DELISLE & OTIS 2016; DULLION 2020: 84-85; NOUWS 2019: 274-314; WOLF 2015: 86-104; KOSKINEN 2014b: 193; PALOPOSKI 2016). These jobs were created following key

moments in the development of the respective states in modern times, but also several decades before the foundation of academic translator training and research institutions.

Knowledge about institutional translators in nineteenth-century national contexts is scattered. Yet the history of these translators is an integral part of the cultural history of the countries in question. Furthermore, from the perspective of Translation Studies, this period can be regarded as an intriguing proto-history shortly “before the professional project” (PALOPOSKI 2016; see also MILAN 2021 on the “proto-professionalisation” of literary translators in the nineteenth century). Exploring the history of these translators can provide insights into how the figure of the institutional translator came into being, or, more precisely, into the historical processes that led to the formation of a professional group. This type of research can contribute to the “cultural branch” of “Translator Studies” (see CHESTERMAN 2009: 19).

This article examines the case of Switzerland from 1848 (when the modern federal state was established) to the First World War. The development and professionalisation of translation in Swiss federal institutions are analysed using digitised documents from the Swiss federal archives. The results of this research are then linked to the findings of other studies on the history of institutional translation that have been carried out in different countries and have touched, albeit marginally, on the subject of translators. Starting from the case study and then widening the scope to consider a comparative perspective, the article identifies lines of research that could serve as a basis for larger-scale studies based on shared research questions. It aims to pave the way for a more transnational, interconnected approach to institutional translators in nineteenth-century national contexts.

## **The case of Switzerland**

### ***Three official languages and a federal, democratic state under construction***

In 1910, Achille Fréchette, a translator at the House of Commons of Canada, sent a report to a committee within the House about visits he had made to Europe the previous year, namely to Brussels and Bern. He had travelled to these capital cities to gather information on how translation departments were organised and how they functioned, with regard to parliamentary matters (DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 180-181, 445-451). One of the characteristics shared by Canada, Belgium and Switzerland at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century was that they were bi/multilingual countries with parliamentary systems.

The case study that will be presented in this article focuses on the modern Swiss Confederation, which was founded in 1848 as a federal, republican and democratic state with three official languages (for the history of official multilingualism in Switzerland, see WEERTS 2015). According to the first existing statistics on the distribution of mother tongues (HSSO 2012), dating back to 1880, German, French and Italian speakers represented 71.4%, 21.4% and 5.7% of the population respectively; a further 1.4% spoke

Romansh, a Romance language with five different varieties present in the mountain region of Grisons, which had no official status at the time. The Confederation was made up of 22 member states – the cantons – which had their own official languages for all matters within their jurisdiction. Most of them had only one official language, which reflects the fact that the national languages of Switzerland are distributed mainly on a geographical basis. In 1874, a new federal constitution was approved, which led to two significant developments. It initiated a movement towards partial centralisation, transferring the power to legislate in more and more areas from the cantons to the Confederation. It also paved the way for the extension of democratic rights through broader access to the instruments of semi-direct democracy (popular referendum and initiative). Between 1874 and the First World War, these two developments helped to create a common political space (WEERTS 2015: 171-175). In accordance with this timeline, the federal institutions, their administrative structures and a regime for official publications were gradually established between 1848 and 1914; the foundations for a formal staff hierarchy were laid in the 1890s (BÜRKI-GYGER 1996; PINI 2017: 41-61).

Little is known about institutional translators in the Swiss Confederation at that time, which is not surprising considering that there were, generally speaking, few explicit legal rules on the use of languages (WEERTS 2015: 739-740). However, some information on specific topics can be gathered from studies on the history of the administration (ADAM 1995; BÜRKI-GYGER 1996) and from a monograph on the case of Italian (PINI 2017), a minority language that was long disadvantaged by the language policy of the Confederation.

### ***Institutional translation, professionalisation, and translators of the past***

Based on original data, this study examines *to what extent, how and why translation became professionalised in the Swiss federal, multilingual institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century*. Before introducing the sources and method used to examine these questions, it is necessary to clarify a few concepts that will be referred to in the study.

First of all, the translation activity that takes place within multilingual institutions will be understood according to the widely adopted definition of *institutional translation* proposed by Koskinen (2008: 22):

*we are dealing with institutional translation in those cases when an official body (government, agency, multinational organisation or a private company, etc.; also an individual person acting in an official status) uses translation as a means of “speaking” to a particular audience. Thus, in institutional translation, the voice that is to be heard is that of the translating institution. As a result, in a constructivist sense, the institution itself gets translated.*

When communicating in several languages, the institution not only “gets translated”, but also uses translation to fulfil its “core function [, which is] to govern [...]. [R]egulatory organisational systems (i.e. institutions) that operate in a multilingual

environment can and often do employ translation in performing their governing function. In that case, they *govern by translation*” (KOSKINEN 2014a: 481). Multilingual institutions exist at various levels: supra- or international, national, regional, local; they also include NGOs (TESSEUR 2023). They adopt translation policies that create specific settings for the practice of translation (BOURGUIGNON et al. 2021). The types of translation processes and products that are used in such institutions can hardly be analysed in isolation from this specific context.

A second key concept is *professionalisation*. It has been the topic of numerous articles and several collective publications over the last 15 years, drawing on the fields of economics and the sociology of professions (SELA-SHEFFY & SHLESINGER 2009-2010; PYM et al. 2013; DAM & KOSKINEN 2016). In a recent systematic review of this literature, Sulaiman et al. (2022: 1) – who define professionalisation as “the process of upgrading the status of translation practice to a publicly recognised profession” – identify “three main theoretical approaches (trait, control, signalling) and six aspects of professionalisation (status, signalling devices, certification, institutional intervention, principles of good practice, education and training)”. The latter list will be used here as a reference that can help to analyse which aspects were represented in the historical processes under study and which were not, and how the situation evolved over time. However, this reference can only be used to a limited extent, and methodological precautions will be taken in data collection to avoid imposing current definitions on past phenomena which should rather be regarded as part of a proto-history of the translation profession. Although translation historians are currently interested in signs of professionalisation in the nineteenth century in a variety of contexts (e.g. ATEFMEHR 2022), they are aware that certain aspects of professionalisation were the exception in the past, which makes the socio-cultural context in which they appeared particularly worth examining (e.g. PLENCOVICH et al. 2021 about academic training). Furthermore, nineteenth-century translators did not form a homogeneous, visible group that could be easily traced in the archives (MILAN 2021).

This leads to a third concept requiring clarification. The very attribution of the name *translator* notoriously varies according to time and place (HUNG 2006). Even when conducting research on European countries in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to question the use of this designation (PALOPOSKI 2016). The initial range of keywords that will be used in this study to locate translation and translators in the sources will therefore be wider (see next subsection). However, the focus will be on the communication that has a direct and lasting impact on shaping the discourse of the institution and thus its “voice”. The archival sources will therefore be searched for traces of *written* translation (e.g. in the political, legal and administrative fields). Given the complexity of professional profiles and designations, this does not rule out the possibility that information on (oral) interpreting may be found in the data, but it should remain marginal.

### ***A systematic analysis of digitised sources***

As the professionalisation of translation in the federal institutions of nineteenth-century Switzerland is a largely unexplored field, this study is based mainly on data taken from a general source that gives an overview of the government's activities: annual reports submitted by the Federal Council (government) to the Federal Assembly (parliament), which are available in digitised format. These data are supplemented on certain points by other archival sources: directories, vacancy announcements, legislation, and legislative history materials. The primary aim is to provide a basis for more targeted research that could be carried out in more specific sources.

The data taken from the annual reports are a subset of those that were collected for the purposes of a previous study with a broader scope (DULLION 2020), in which the reports were systematically analysed to investigate the Confederation's translation policy between 1848 and 1914. A full-text search was carried out based on an extensive list of keywords, and the relevant passages were classified by theme<sup>1</sup>. The results (86-89) showed that the Confederation's translation policy had remained selective, flexible and only partially institutionalised during the period under study, and that this had been to the disadvantage of Italian. Furthermore, it appeared that this translation policy had been shaped and reshaped as the state framework was changing, particularly as the federal and democratic structures were being reformed. The data relating to the translators turned out to be one of the richest thematic categories. They are analysed in depth in this article, with regard to the research questions on professionalisation (to what extent, how and why?) which were formulated above.

The next subsection presents the main features that stand out in the resulting group profile: the characteristics that give translation and translators a place on the institutional map; the diversity of job types and professional statuses; the essential link between translation and law in the process of building multilingual institutions; the position and role of institutional translators within society at large; and, by way of conclusion, the level and aspects of professionalisation.

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<sup>1</sup> The annual reports are bilingual parallel documents (in German and French) with equal official status. The French version was used in the study.

The list of keywords was: "tradu\*"; "langue\*"; "en allemand", "en français", "en italien", "en rhét\*", "en roman\*"; "édition\*", "publication\*", "rédaction\*", "texte\*", "version\*".

The resulting thematic categories were: 1. managing multilingualism in general, 2. translation and transfer, 3. non-translation, 4. what is translated, 5. multilingualism and official publications, 6. multilingualism in the legislative process, 7. communicating with the cantons, 8. Italian and Romansh as special cases, 9. multilingualism in foreign affairs, 10. *profile and status of translators*, 11. constraints and costs of multilingualism, 12. paying for translation, 13. problems with translations, 14. benefits from translations, 15. approaches to intertextual divergence.

For details on the methodology, see DULLION 2020: 69-72.

## A group profile

### *Locating and identifying translation and translators*

The analysis of the Federal Council’s annual reports [hereafter cited as “AR”] from 1848 to 1914 mainly highlights the fact that Swiss federal institutions initially operated in a multilingual way on a daily basis. They practiced translation, along with a range of other activities. As a result, translation appears in a wide variety of forms. It was practised in different interactional contexts and social environments, by many types of actors, and at multiple levels. This can be illustrated by the following quote:

*Les délibérations de la commission d'experts pour la revision de la partie spéciale de l'avant-projet de code pénal suisse de 1903 ont eu lieu au mois d'avril, comme c'était prévu, sur la base d'un nouveau texte élaboré par M. le professeur Dr Stooss; leur résultat a été communiqué au département, avec un rapport du rédacteur. M. le professeur A. Gautier, à Genève, a été chargé de la traduction de ce projet en français, travail qu'il a remis à la fin de 1908 au président de la commission. Le texte français sera discuté et arrêté définitivement au printemps de 1909, après quoi il sera transmis au département.* (AR 1908: 14)

*[The deliberations of the committee of experts on the revision of the special part of the 1903 preliminary draft of a Swiss criminal code took place in April, as planned, on the basis of a new text drawn up by Professor Stooss. The results were communicated to the department, together with a report from the drafter. Professor A. Gautier, in Geneva, was asked to translate the draft into French. He submitted his work at the end of 1908 to the chairman of the committee. The French text will be discussed and finalised in the spring of 1909, after which it will be forwarded to the department.]*

In this example, translation occurs at an early stage of a bilingual legislative process. A target-language subject-matter expert is entrusted with the task of translating a draft document, and his contribution will be discussed and amended in the collective and bilingual context of an expert committee, before the document makes its way to the government.

Some features drawn from the data set make translation identifiable among complex multilingual practices of this kind. One of the most salient features is a number of reflections on how to ensure the quality of multilingual texts. Measures taken to ensure quality included checking the accuracy of the translation through bilingual re-reading (AR 1884: 251), revising the translation (AR 1868: 238; 1869: 242), and having the translation re-read by the author of the source text (AR 1865: 2-3) or revised by other subject-matter experts (AR 1880: 397). Corrections were occasionally made after a text had already been approved (AR 1877: 42, 49). These measures are prominent in the production of legislation, a field in which particular care was taken to ensure consistency between the texts in the different languages (AR 1874: 172, 179) (see the subsection on translation and the law). Concerns for quality can be observed in the

legislative field as early as the 1860s. They become more apparent following the adoption of the 1874 constitution and the major legislative projects that arose as a result. Another feature of the data set that gives a certain visibility to translation activities and to the people who performed them is the way they were named. On this point, it is worth supplementing the analysis of the annual reports with targeted research using more specific sources and explicit designations as keywords. It turns out that the position of “translator” was referred to as such when Switzerland first became a federal state: one position was advertised in each house of parliament (VA 1849; 1850b), and three more vacancies were opened in the Federal Chancellery (central administrative service) (VA 1850a). Translators made up a significant proportion of the latter’s staff: three out of the 13 employees were translators in 1850 (BÜRKI-GYGER 1996: 4). The first vacancy announcement for the Chancellery emphasised the need for handwriting ability, education and morality. As for the parliament’s translators, it is interesting to note that they were given their own premises in the Federal Palace (AR 1895: 266). From the mid-1870s onwards (coinciding with the adoption of the second federal constitution), further positions were created in the administration’s specialist departments (for details of the appointments, see AR 1873-1879; for an overview of the resulting situation, compare FD 1879 to 1873). Incidentally, there is evidence of translators moving from one department to another (compare AR 1879: 17 and 1882: 112). Translation was thus partly decentralised, which made a positive impression on the Canadian translator Fréchet during his visit in 1909-1910 (quoted in DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 447-449).

As for the distribution of federal translators by language combination, it can be noted that while German (majority language) to French (first minority language) stands out as the most common pattern, all combinations and directions were represented (e.g. Italian to German, AR 1857: 280). Information on the geographical origins of these translators (which is systematically included in the federal directories) shows that bilingual areas, or areas of intensive language contact, were overrepresented, suggesting that some translators were likely to work in several language combinations and/or directions. It should also be mentioned that the annual reports illustrate the already well-known imbalanced nature of language policies and how this negatively affected Italian, the second minority language. Translation into Italian was marginalised, relocated to the Italian-speaking region (far from the capital Bern), or even outsourced (AR 1851: 67-69; 1883: 62-63, 386; 1886: 180; 1892: 194; see also Fréchet’s observations, quoted in DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 445). The situation only gradually improved from 1917 onwards, with the creation of a special department within the Federal Chancellery (see PINI 2017: 25-61). Although the third minority language, Romansh, had no official status at the time, traces of translation into Romansh supported by the Confederation can be found in exceptional cases (AR 1909: 10). (For more information on the general German-French focus of federal language and translation policy in the nineteenth century, beyond the specific question of institutional translators, see DULLION 2020: 70, 74, 75, 79, 82-83, 87-88.)

***Translator positions in the civil service and a patchwork of other jobs***

In addition to clearly identifiable translator positions, translation played a part in a whole collection of hybrid and external jobs, either on a permanent or occasional basis. This situation continued throughout the period studied.

In 1897, the translator positions within the civil service were integrated into a system of salary grades, which were applicable to the entire federal administration (Act 1897). The grades ranged from I (CHF 6000-8000 per year) for heads of administrative departments to VII (less than CHF 2500) for junior staff, clerical assistants, copyists, messengers. Translators were placed in grade III (CHF 4000-5500, art. 8), with other qualified professionals who potentially had supervisory duties. In a later document relating more specifically to the Federal Chancellery, this ranking on the salary scale was justified by the fact that capable, well-read translators could not be recruited for lower salaries (“on ne saurait à moins trouver des traducteurs capables, ayant une culture littéraire” – Dispatch 1919: 291). Furthermore, the annual reports show that there was a hierarchy and opportunities for promotion between different translator positions (AR 1903: 81). Promotions also occurred from translator positions to jobs in other fields and vice versa (compare AR 1895: 156; 1896: 78; 1899: 96-97; 1904: 5).

Other people were performing translation duties within the federal administration either as part of a hybrid role, such as clerk-translator, or as part of a non-designated role that involved translation. The last two categories can be found at the bottom of the ladder (clerk-translator, AR 1875: 292), at the very top (second vice-chancellor – see AR 1896: 78; VA 1895; Act 1897: 629, where the position appears in grade I; see also the section on translation and law), and at intermediate levels (AR 1881: 293; 1914: 623). On one occasion, it is mentioned that a translator acted as an English interpreter at an international conference (AR 1876: 133). Moreover, the annual reports mention external translators working regularly (under a kind of framework agreement, AR 1869: 242) or occasionally (AR 1891: 48; see also Dispatch 1919: 291). Finally, people with different mother tongues incidentally acted as translators in major federal projects, as voluntary members of official committees in their specialist fields (e.g. pharmacists and doctors in AR 1892: 206-207, 215). This is an effect of the system of part-time public service which was an important feature of Swiss public life in the nineteenth century and continued to some extent afterwards (see the entry “Milice, système de” in DHS).

The boundaries between the different groups listed in this section were relatively fluid (AR 1862: 31 in conjunction with 1866: 65-66; see also Dispatch 1919: 291). Furthermore, the coexistence of translator positions and various jobs involving translation within the federal administration can still be observed towards the end of the period studied (e.g. FD 1900: 32, 34, 79 and passim). This means that the kind of institutional translation which could have an impact on the country’s (linguistic) history was largely performed by people whose job title was not “translator”. This also raises the question of whether and to what extent the different groups formed a community.

***Translation and law: a key field for building multilingual institutions***

In the early days of the federal state, institutional translation was intertwined with governmental activities in various areas. The Federal Chancellery quickly realised the need to use not only “des traducteurs ordinaires [ordinary translators]”, but also “des hommes spéciaux pour les travaux difficiles [specialists for difficult jobs]” (AR 1854:141). Institutional translation was part of building a new political space at a time of profound technical, economic and social change. This process involved implementing rules for the whole country in the increasingly broad areas of life that the federal state had been given responsibility over, and this was done with a democratic ambition. So it is hardly surprising that institutional translation was closely associated with law, in terms of the profiles and tasks of the people who performed it. When the annual reports provide information on translators (of all categories), legal qualifications are often mentioned. Many of the people working as translators held a doctorate in law and came from judicial (AR 1881: 18) or academic circles (AR 1864: 110 – in this particular case, the translator demonstrated his competence in a job described as “scientifiquement exigeant [scientifically demanding]”, which led the administration to pay an exceptionally high fee, in line with market standards, see AR 1865: 3).

As noted above, specific measures to guarantee reliability were taken most visibly in the legislative field. They were often adopted under parliamentary pressure (e.g. AR 1868: 238; 1869: 242; 1874: 172, 179; 1880: 397). From the 1890s onwards, they developed into highly sophisticated working methods: bodies and procedures were introduced which helped to integrate translation into complex processes of multilingual text production. First of all, the position of second vice-chancellor was created in 1895. Interesting details of this job can be found in a document released in 1919 (shortly after the period studied in this article), which provides a historical overview of the organisation of the Federal Chancellery. At that time, the second vice-chancellor was, as originally planned, responsible for checking the French version of Federal Council documents. In doing so, he paid particular attention to ensuring that the French translations were both accurate and flawless in style (“à ce que les traductions en français [...] soient exactes et de forme irréprochable”); he also had to translate particularly important decisions himself, especially those of a legal nature (“il doit faire lui-même la traduction [des décisions] qui présentent une importance particulière, notamment celles qui sont de nature juridique”) (Dispatch 1919: 291). From 1902, the second vice-chancellor took part in the work of parliamentary drafting committees responsible for checking the texts of federal acts before they were voted on. The task of these committees was to ensure, among other things, consistency between the different language versions (for details, see Dispatch 1899: 651-652, 662, 666, 674; and the resulting Act 1902: 606-607, art. 8, 9 and 12).

Georges Wagnière, the first person to be appointed second vice-chancellor, was trained as a lawyer (see his entry in DHS). Beyond him, several bi/multilingual lawyers mentioned in the annual reports for their work as translators are also renowned for their role in building the Swiss federal state in the nineteenth century. In the annual reports, they appear as experts or as members of parliament taking part in committees, in

particular in the context of the codification of civil and criminal law. They were active and influential players whose contribution included, but was by no means limited to, translation. Examples are Virgile Rossel and Albert Gobat for French (AR 1894: 447-449; 1899: 239-240; 1903: 13-14), and Brenno Bertoni and Stefano Gabuzzi for Italian (AR 1905: 13; 1910: 17; 1911: 665-666) (see the corresponding entries in DHS). Virgile Rossel is known in contemporary Translation Studies as a pioneer, who left his mark both through his practice and his revolutionary thinking. He is considered to be a precursor to communicative approaches to legal translation, where the focus is on the function of the translated text (see among others ŠARČEVIĆ 1997: 36-41).

Thus, it appears that a background in law was a key factor in becoming a translator – and in particular an influential translator – in nineteenth-century Swiss federal institutions. Participating in state-building processes as a lawyer was instrumental in enabling some translators to shape legal translation practices and legal language (for the influence of lawyers on the modern federal state and on the unification of law in Switzerland in the nineteenth century, see DHS, “Juristes”). The absence of a clear separation between institutional translation and other activities (political, legal, administrative) placed these translators in a position of agency. The latter observation casts an interesting light on more recent developments: in the early 1990s, once translation had become a specific, professional activity, one of the measures taken to improve the quality of multilingual legislative texts was to better integrate language professionals into interdisciplinary processes (see ALBRECHT 2001 on co-drafting) – what this amounts to is rebuilding a close link between translation and law after the advent of the “professional project”.

### ***Mediators within a multilingual society in the making***

While the sources show that a legal profile was an important characteristic of institutional translation and translators, it is only the most obvious manifestation of a more general characteristic: proximity to power and involvement in public life. Institutional translation and translators were taking part in the process of building a new society.

On the one hand, translation was a power issue. As shown by the effect of parliamentary pressure on the methods for multilingual text production in the legislative field, translation quality was occasionally subject to powerful feedback. Some recipients of the translations (namely members of parliament from minority language regions) were in a position to assess the quality and voice their opinions. Moreover, the lack of translation to Italian and Romansh had democratic implications, which were debated against the backdrop of federalism and semi-direct democracy (AR 1877: 31-32; 1881: 34-36; see also PINI 2017: 25-61 and appendix 163-177).

On the other hand, translators were part of or had close links with political circles. This was obviously the case for the most influential translators, but also for many translators who were members of the federal parliament (AR 1866: 65-66) or of cantonal governments (AR 1891: 10) and who were working on a freelance basis on specific assignments. On this point, it is interesting to look at the biographies (DHS) of the leading lawyers mentioned in the previous section, as well as that of Elie Ducommun, who

worked as a translator for the Federal Assembly and the Federal Chancellery in the years around 1870 (AR 1868: 238; 1869: 242; 1871: 206). These people shared the following characteristics: they were members of (or close to) the Free Democratic Party (a pillar of the federal state in the nineteenth century – see DHS “Parti radical-démocratique (PRD)”); they were involved in public life (societies or movements); their work was published in the press and/or in a wide variety of cultural fields (literature, history, economics). These recurring features in the personal backgrounds of institutional translators highlight their position as mediators *within* a multilingual society in the making – their efforts as bridge-builders between languages and cultures were directed towards their fellow citizens.

This is clearly a direct consequence of the fact that institutional translation was, to a large extent, the domain of educated, multilingual people for whom it was just one of many activities in society. This pattern, which is widespread and not limited to nineteenth-century Switzerland, was potentially reinforced by the country’s tradition of part-time public service which was referred to above (see “Milice, système de” in DHS). Two points that tend to give translation and translators a distinct profile should nevertheless be borne in mind. First, the act of translating was explicitly named, even when it was of secondary importance (AR 1893: 628; 1910: 497). Second, institutional translation was indeed professionalised, albeit partially.

### ***Level and aspects of professionalisation***

How can this professionalisation be described? As a conclusion to the case study, which has examined historical processes on the basis of archival sources and with reference to a broad conception of translation and translators, this initial question can be addressed here while taking into account more recent thinking on the concept of professionalisation.

At the end of the period under study, a number of elements were in place that helped to distinguish translation as an activity in its own right, requiring specific, valuable skills. One of these elements was a status (SULAIMAN et al. 2022: 6-8): in the early decades of the federal state, positions had already been created in the civil service for a clearly defined activity, involving skills and methods, a spatial and temporal framework, a formal status within a hierarchy, substantial remuneration, and career development opportunities. These positions contributed to “upgrading the status of translation practice to a publicly recognised profession” (SULAIMAN et al. 2022: 1). An in-depth study of other sources would be necessary to learn more about the recruitment criteria for these internal translators. Significantly, one annual report states that a position was left vacant due to a lack of suitable applicants: “la place [...] est restée vacante par suite du manque de postulants capables” – AR 1873: 83. With regard to external translators, the signalling devices for making skills identifiable on the institutional labour market (SULAIMAN et al. 2022: 5-6, 8-10) were not yet highly developed. Besides being a lawyer who is well connected in political circles, the information available in the reports points to signals such as already being known to federal institutions, and/or already having worked as a translator (AR 1881: 18) – in other words, at the time, usual

signals seem to have been limited to work experience and word-of-mouth recommendations (in contrast to a list that would be longer today, including translator certifications, academic qualifications, and association memberships).

In addition to the *status of internal translators*, another key element of professionalisation that is well represented in the historical process under study is the *principles of good practice*, in particular the process standards (SULAIMAN et al. 2022: 12-13). Working methods were formalised, *in response to a need for good quality that was politically motivated and strongly voiced*, in the context of a federal and democratic state under construction.

*These elements of professionalisation, however, coexisted over the long term with hybrid profiles and activities*, including in particular a legal background. This hybridity gave certain translators influence by enabling them to participate more widely in shaping the new institutions, and society in general.

## **A comparative perspective: from similar facts to shared research questions**

### ***Institutional translation in multilingual countries in the nineteenth century – an overview of existing research***

In addition to Switzerland, the bilingual national contexts of Canada and Belgium, as well as various relevant cases from nineteenth-century Europe, have been the subject of studies on the history of institutional translation and translators (see the references mentioned in the introduction to this article, and also D’HULST & SCHREIBER 2014; SCHREIBER 2016). Researchers have also begun to explore translation policies during the same period in the local contexts of various European towns and cities (D’HULST & KOSKINEN 2020), providing a perspective on how institutional translation and translators were affected by the interaction between different levels of power within a state (national, regional and local).

The case studies that are part of this body of research were conducted from different perspectives: not all of them have a specific focus on *translators* and on how they came to form a professional group in multilingual institutions. However, the historical information that they provide can be used – in combination with the findings from the Swiss case study presented in this article – to open avenues for comparative studies that examine what lied at the heart of professionalising institutional translation in nineteenth-century national contexts.

Traces of institutional translators and signs of their professionalisation could also be found at earlier points in history and in other parts of the world, namely in cases of multilingual empires. It would certainly be relevant to conduct research on such a large temporal and spatial scale. In relation to this overall picture, it should be noted here that the cases covered in this article have proto-historical relevance for a particular type of multilingual institution – those that refer to a relationship between language, society and power inherited from Western modernity.

### ***Thematic clusters for a translator history beyond case studies***

An initial, descriptive comparison between various national contexts could obviously focus on practical aspects, such as the status of institutional translators, their formalised working methods, the organisational structure, levels and pace of professionalisation, languages and specialisations, and sociological profiles (particularly with regard to gender – women are conspicuously absent from the data presented here, which contrasts with the chapter in DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 249-276). Expanding on this, similarities between broader phenomena can be identified that call for more ambitious research questions. A possible approach would involve highlighting local variations of these phenomena and analysing them in relation to wider cultural contexts, with reference to appropriate theoretical frameworks.

By way of illustration, several thematic clusters are presented here, together with comparative references and some suggestions for theoretical development:

- What can be inferred from the *staff profile and distribution* of institutional translators with regard to the priorities of translation policies, particularly in terms of languages? In this respect, the institutional map in Switzerland looks very different from that in Canada (DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 26-33, 42-43) or the Habsburg monarchy (WOLF 2015: 41-43, 49-114).
- How and why did institutional translators adopt – or were institutional translators integrated into – *procedures and processes* to ensure what was considered to be *good-quality* multilingual communication? (See e.g. WOLF 2015: 82-96.)
- What *different types of translator status* coexisted, even within institutions? (See DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 21-25; KOSKINEN 2014b: 192-193, 197-200; WOLF 2015: 62-72.) Hybrid jobs still exist today in certain local contexts (see DE CAMILLIS 2021 on civil servants working as “occasional translators” in the provincial administration of South Tyrol). Did the different types of institutional translators form a *community* (TAIVALKOSKI-SHILOV 2017: 15; see also CADWELL et al. 2022)? If that is the case, what held this community together and what were its tangible manifestations, for example in relation to language norms (see e.g. DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 127-132, 303-319, 356-365, 429-431, 435-436)?
- How important was *subject specialisation*, particularly in the field of *law*, for institutional translators? (See DELISLE & OTIS 2016: 4, 43, 427; WOLF 2015: 72-110.)
- In what respects was the professionalisation of institutional translation an *issue of power*, an object of debate, or part of a national narrative? How can this political dimension be analysed in relation to the country’s constitutional model and to the balance between the different language groups? Delisle & Otis 2016 give a detailed account of the heated debate in Canada over whether or not to centralise language services (171-211) and highlight the symbolic importance of the translation profession in Canada (431-437). (See also NOUWS 2019: 389-433 for Belgium.)
- What *other activities* – professional or not – did institutional translators tend to do alongside translation, according to their biographies? Delisle & Otis 2016 provide an in-depth analysis of the specific cultural factors and networks that may explain the close connection between institutional translation and journalism in Canada

(67-170, 427-429); they also explore combinations with other activities in the arts, sciences and sports (353-424). Pym (2009: 23 – see also 33-35, 45) has suggested using “multidiscursive involvement (translators usually do more than translate)” as a basis for “humanising Translation History”. A prosopography and a sociology of translators (DELISLE 2022: 6) offer ways of identifying and understanding combinations specific to a given context, as well as the implications of these combinations in terms of agency (CHESTERMAN 2009). Studies along this line could refer more specifically to the “multipolar model of cultural mediators within multicultural spaces” proposed for Belgium in the period 1830-1945, a “heterogeneous context in which several languages and cultural domains interacted” (D’HULST et al. 2014: 1255).

Finally, the story of Achille Fréchette suggests a further avenue of research, namely contacts and exchanges *between* institutions. Bridges between the experiences of different bi/multilingual countries are yet to be explored, as well as possible links between these experiences and the establishment of the language services in international organisations. Comparative studies could then turn into “relational approaches” such as “connected history and *histoire croisée*” (WAKABAYASHI 2018).

### Concluding remarks

The possibility of these broader approaches sheds new light on the relevance of a history of institutional translators in nineteenth-century national contexts, i.e. “before the professional project”. The experience of these translators no longer appears to be merely a prescientific craft, confined to mundane activities such as producing multilingual administrative documents. Neither can it be reduced to a piece of (occupational or cultural) heritage, waiting to be rescued from invisibility. As a matter of fact, these translators had to continually ask themselves “how and why”, and to make choices between several possibilities. In this respect, their practices and ideas can be seen as *part of a history of “translation knowledge and know-how”* rather than of a “pre-discipline” (D’HULST 2021: 17, 4).

The history of these translators can also stimulate reflection at a more theoretical level, provided it is given enough empirical attention, and care is taken to avoid overgeneralisation. This potential can be illustrated here by three points. First, this article has shown that *a powerful driver for professionalisation in some national contexts was a need for translations that would meet the quality expectations of the time, provided that this need was recognised and voiced on the political scene*. This raises the question of the possible implications of the absence or loss of such political traction in other multilingual contexts. Second, *the process of professionalisation appears to be neither linear, nor unequivocal in terms of agency and recognition*. The creation of a body of civil servant translators may mean a loss of influence on society and on translation policy itself. In any case, professionalisation is a transition “from thick to thin trust” (RIZZI et al. 2019: 50), that is from “trust based on close connections with and knowledge of a person or institution” to “impersonalised trust based on the reputation of an institution or

profession rather than individuals” (115), and this development has a significant impact on the question of agency. Third, one of the characteristics of translators in multilingual national institutions compared to other categories of translators is that *their work is targeted primarily at their fellow citizens*. How do relation to the target audience and awareness of this social dimension appear in different cultural contexts? Historical variations in the way institutional translators, as a group, approach this aspect of their task may be central to understanding what meaning they give to their work.

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NB: All these documents are fully available from the Swiss Federal Archives (Bern) – digitised official publications, <https://www.amtsdruckschriften.bar.admin.ch>, in parallel official German and French text. The materials are listed here in the French text, which was used as the basis for this study.

- AR [year]: [page] = Annual reports from the government: *Rapports de gestion du Conseil fédéral*, 1848-1914.
- FD [year]: [page] = Federal directories: *Annuaire de la Confédération Suisse*, 1873, 1879, 1900.
- VA 1849, 1850a, 1850b, 1895 = Vacancy announcements retrieved from the Federal Gazette [*Feuille fédérale*, hereafter “FF”]: FF 1849 I 74; 1850 I 6; 1850 I 94; 1895 IV 188.
- Legislation and legislative history – materials from the Federal Gazette, in chronological order:

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**Katrin Menzel**

## Eine korpusbasierte diachrone Untersuchung zu übersetzten Wissenschaftsartikeln aus den Zeitschriften der Royal Society of London

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### Abstract

*Dieser Beitrag beschreibt eine Korpusstudie zu den englischen Übersetzungen von naturwissenschaftlichen Texten, die in Zeitschriften der Royal Society of London seit dem 17. Jhd. veröffentlicht wurden. Als Datengrundlage dient das Royal Society Corpus (RSC), welches vor allem originalsprachliche englische Fachartikel, aber auch eine beachtliche Anzahl von übersetzten englischen Beiträgen aus Zeitschriften wie den Philosophical Transactions und den Proceedings der Royal Society beinhaltet. In einem ersten Schritt werden die übersetzten Fachartikel in den Daten identifiziert und in einem zusammenfassenden Überblick im Hinblick auf ihre genauen Entstehungszeiten, Themen, Ausgangssprachen und Übersetzer analysiert. Dabei stellt sich u. a. heraus, dass die meisten Übersetzungen im RSC aus dem 18. Jhd. stammen. Daher werden in einem nächsten Schritt speziell diese Texte in Bezug auf ausgewählte linguistische Merkmale untersucht, welche geeignet sind, um eine übersetzungswissenschaftliche Universalienhypothese, und zwar die ‚Normalisierungshypothese‘, in einem historischen Kontext zu überprüfen. Hierbei soll geklärt werden, ob die übersetzten Texte durch sprachlich weniger innovative Merkmale geprägt sind als nicht-übersetzte englische Vergleichstexte aus dem RSC. Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass Normalisierung und eine stärkere Nutzung von konventionelleren sprachlichen Strukturen keine auf die historischen Wissenschaftsübersetzungen zutreffende Übersetzungspraktiken waren. Anschließend wird ein Ausblick auf den Aufbau eines multilingualen Parallelkorpus mit den übersetzten Fachartikeln und ihren jeweiligen Ausgangstexten gegeben, um weitere Untersuchungen zu prototypischen Übersetzungseigenschaften zu ermöglichen, bei denen auch der Einfluss der Ausgangstexte berücksichtigt werden kann.*

*Keywords: Philosophical Transactions*

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### Abstract:

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### Einleitung

Dieser Beitrag bietet einen Überblick über eine systematische Untersuchung von englischen Wissenschaftsübersetzungen, die in Zeitschriften der Royal Society of London zwischen dem 17. und dem 20. Jhd. erschienen sind. In dem Beitrag werden verschiedene Ergebnisse in Bezug auf die linguistischen und metalinguistischen Merkmale der analysierten Wissenschaftsübersetzungen zusammengefasst, die vorab teilweise in einem informellen Festschriftartikel (MENZEL 2023) und einem Konferenzbeitrag (MENZEL 2024) thematisiert wurden.<sup>1</sup> Als Datengrundlage für die korpusbasierte Unter-

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<sup>1</sup>Die Arbeit, über die in diesem Beitrag berichtet wird, steht im Zusammenhang mit dem SFB 1102 Informationsdichte und sprachliche Kodierung, gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) – Projekt-ID 232722074. Das verwendete Korpus hat eine öffentlich zugängliche

suchung dient das Royal Society Corpus (RSC, Korpusversionen 6.0, 6.0.4 und 7.0, vgl. KERMES et al. 2016; FISCHER et al. 2020; MENZEL et al. 2021). Das Korpus beinhaltet ca. 48.000 englische naturwissenschaftliche Artikel aus Fachzeitschriften der Londoner Royal Society von 1665 bis 1996. Die Artikel stammen vor allem aus den *Philosophical Transactions* und den *Proceedings* der Royal Society<sup>2</sup>, welche zunächst alle naturwissenschaftlichen Bereiche abdeckten und sich dann im 20. Jhd. stärker auf Mathematik, Physik und Ingenieurwissenschaften (Serie A) sowie Biologie (Serie B) spezialisierten. Unter der großen Menge von englischen Fachartikeln im RSC lassen sich knapp 200 explizit als Übersetzung gekennzeichnete Publikationen finden. Obwohl ihr Anteil am Gesamtkorpus vergleichsweise gering erscheinen mag, machen sie für sich gesehen jedoch eine einzigartige und durchaus umfangreiche Sammlung an historischen englischen Fachübersetzungen mit teils beachtlicher Textlänge aus, vor allem aus der Zeit von Late Modern English (LModE, ca. 1700-1900). Diese historischen Texte sind interessante Dokumente im Kontext des englischsprachigen Wissenschaftsdiskurses. Sie repräsentieren vorrangig bestimmte Bereiche, für die es bedeutsame Forschungszentren im europäischen Ausland, z. B. in Frankreich oder im deutschsprachigen Raum gab und mit denen die Royal Society auf wissenschaftlicher Basis international vernetzt war.

Zur Zeit der Entstehung der modernen Fachübersetzung als Übersetzungsgattung spielten Wissenschaftsakademien generell eine zentrale Rolle als „Übersetzungsagenturen“, wie in einem Teilprojekt des DFG-Schwerpunktprogrammes *Übersetzungskulturen der frühen Neuzeit* festgestellt wurde, welches sich Wissenschaftsübersetzungen in Frankreich bis zum Jahr 1800, also vorrangig Übersetzungen aus dem Deutschen, Italienischen und Englischen ins Französische widmet.<sup>3</sup> Über die Entstehungsgeschichte der *englischen* modernen Fachübersetzungen gibt es jedoch kaum systematische Untersuchungen, vor allem keine korpusbasierten. Dieser Beitrag schließt daher eine allgemeine Forschungslücke in der korpusbasierten diachronen Übersetzungswissenschaft, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Zielsprache Englisch, die in der Übersetzungsforschung zu Fachtexten und anderen Textsorten bisher deutlich weniger Beachtung gefunden hat als das Englische als Ausgangssprache. An den Übersetzungen und nicht-übersetzten vergleichbaren Texten im RSC lassen sich bestimmte, in der Literatur vorgeschlagene Hypothesen zu Übersetzungsuniversalien als prototypische Merkmale der übersetzten

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Version, die per Download oder über eine CQPweb Korpusanalyse-Plattform zur Verfügung steht: [https://fedora.clarin-d.uni-saarland.de/rsc\\_v6/](https://fedora.clarin-d.uni-saarland.de/rsc_v6/) (s. auch <https://hdl.handle.net/21.11119/0000-0004-8E37-F>).

Die Autorin dankt außerdem Louisiane Ferlier für ihre wertvollen Anmerkungen zu den Materialien in den Archiven der Royal Society.

<sup>2</sup> Neben den *Philosophical Transactions* und den *Proceedings* als Hauptquellen für die Texte im RSC, enthält das Korpus auch Artikel aus einigen anderen Zeitschriften wie den *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.spp2130.de/index.php/wissenschaftsuebersetzungenii/> (Projektleiter: Andreas Gipper) / <https://italienisch.fb06.uni-mainz.de/wissenschaftsuebersetzungen-in-frankreich-im-klassischen-zeitalter/> (28.12.2024).

Sprache korpusbasiert aus diachroner Perspektive überprüfen. Während hier in einem ersten Schritt zunächst die übersetzten Fachartikel im RSC identifiziert und in einem zusammenfassenden Überblick im Hinblick auf ihre genauen Entstehungszeiten, Themen, Ausgangssprachen und Übersetzer<sup>4</sup> analysiert werden, konzentriert sich die an diese Ergebnisse anknüpfende linguistische Analyse auf die Überprüfung einer speziellen Universalienhypothese. Es wird ein Vergleich der übersetzten wissenschaftlichen Artikel aus dem 18. Jhd. mit nicht-übersetzten englischen RSC-Texten aus diesem Zeitraum vorgenommen, da sich die meisten Übersetzungen im RSC in dieser ersten Hälfte der LModE-Periode finden lassen und sich diese Texte daher besonders eignen, um an ihnen mit korpuslinguistischen Mitteln die übersetzungswissenschaftliche Normalisierungshypothese (BAKER 1996: 183) in einem konkreten historischen Kontext auf der Basis einer soliden Datengrundlage zu überprüfen.

Nach einem zusammenfassenden Literaturüberblick zu wissenschaftlichen Fachübersetzungen mit dem Schwerpunkt auf bisherigen Arbeiten zu Texten aus dem Umfeld der Royal Society in Abschnitt 2 folgt, wie oben bereits erwähnt, eine allgemeine Untersuchung aller Übersetzungen im RSC in den Abschnitten 3 bis 5 dieses Beitrages. Danach werden in Abschnitt 6 die Übersetzungen aus dem 18. Jhd., welche den größten Teil der Übersetzungen im RSC ausmachen, auf spezielle Strukturen überprüft, die als innovative Merkmale von LModE gelten. Es ist bekannt, dass sich zu dieser Zeit bestimmte Strukturen im Bereich der Nominal- und Verbalphrasen zunehmend etablierten. Zu den Strukturen, die während LModE an Häufigkeit zugenommen haben, gehören durch Leerzeichen getrennte Nomen+Nomen-Komposita, die Ausdruck einer zunehmenden Verdichtung und Komplexität von Nominalphrasen in englischen Wissenschaftstexten sind (BIBER & GRAY 2016). Beispiele für diese *open compounds* (STEIN 1985: 38; SANCHEZ-STOCKHAMMER 2018) als Mehrwortausdrücke in frühen englischen Wissenschaftsartikeln im RSC sind u. a. *antagonist muscles* oder *burning lens*. Als Ergebnis der Großen Komplementverschiebung (*Great Complement Shift*, s. ROHDENBURG 2006: 144; VOSBERG 2006) haben außerdem *-ing*-Komplemente nach Verben (z. B. *omit telling*) während LModE an Häufigkeit zugenommen, da sie seit dieser Zeit zunehmend Funktionen von *to*-Infinitiven (z. B. *omit to tell*) übernommen haben.<sup>5</sup>

Diese Arbeit geht von der o. g. Normalisierungshypothese aus, einer sogenannten T-Universalie im Sinne einer übersetzungsspezifischen Eigenschaft, die durch die Analyse von zwei vergleichbaren Korpora von übersetzten und nicht-übersetzten Texten in derselben Sprache identifiziert werden kann (CHESTERMAN 2004, T = *target*, s. auch VALENCIA GIRALDO et al. 2021 für eine zusammenfassende Diskussion über die

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<sup>4</sup> Dem historischen Kontext und den Eigenschaften der Daten entsprechend wird in dieser Arbeit das generische Maskulinum verwendet. Es wurde insgesamt kein übersetzter Text in den Daten identifiziert, an dem eine Frau als Autorin beteiligt war und nur einer, der von einer Frau übersetzt worden war.

<sup>5</sup> *To*-Infinitivergänzungen hatten ihrerseits in vielen Fällen bereits seit dem Mittelenglischen Alternativstrukturen in Form von *that*-Sätzen als Ergänzung von verschiedenen Verben verdrängt.

entsprechenden Begrifflichkeiten in der Übersetzungswissenschaftlichen Literatur). Mithilfe einer korpuslinguistischen Analyse im Hinblick auf die o. g. Strukturen soll die von Baker aufgestellte Hypothese überprüft werden, dass Übersetzungen üblicherweise eine höhere Anzahl an für die Zielsprache typischen Merkmalen aufweisen als vergleichbare, direkt in der Zielsprache produzierte Texte (*Normalisation / Conservatism*). Obwohl Baker anmerkt, dass es sich bei *Normalisation* um eine Tendenz handelt, die in Abhängigkeit von Faktoren wie dem Status der Ausgangssprache stärker oder weniger stark auftreten kann, betrachtet sie *Normalisation* gleichzeitig als allgemeingültige Universalie, die sie grundsätzlich als Merkmal aller Übersetzungen erwartet (vgl. VALENCIA GIRALDO et al. 2021: 339). Es wird daher von der Erwartung ausgegangen, dass übersetzte Forschungsartikel aus dem 18. Jhd. durch „konservativere“ und konventionellere Muster gekennzeichnet sein werden als vergleichbare originalsprachliche Artikel und dass sie stärker oder gar in übertriebenem Maße von traditionellen Strukturen der englischen Sprache gekennzeichnet sind. Gleichzeitig sollten sich innovative linguistische Formen, die sich zur Zeit von LModE in der englischen Sprache schrittweise etabliert haben, vorrangig in den originalsprachlichen, nicht-übersetzten englischen Fachtexten finden lassen. Wenn Normalisierung ein allgemeingültiges Prinzip für übersetzte Texte ist, dann werden sich die Übersetzungen im RSC aus dem 18. Jhd. in dieser Hinsicht von den originalsprachlichen wissenschaftlichen Texten aus der gleichen Zeitspanne unterscheiden. Neben dem Häufigkeitsvergleich für die o. g. Strukturen werden auch die im RSC annotierten Surprisalwerte für die untersuchten Konstruktionen untersucht (cf. SHANNON 1948; HALE 2001; LEVY 2008; DEGAETANO-ORTLIEB & TEICH 2022). Höhere Surprisalwerte von linguistischen Einheiten deuten auf einen informativeren und weniger konventionalisierten Sprachgebrauch im Text hin, was aber auch mit einer tendenziell geringeren Wahrscheinlichkeit und Vorhersagbarkeit der Einheiten in ihren jeweiligen Kontexten und einem vermutlich höherem kognitiven Verarbeitungsaufwand einhergeht.

### **Theoretischer Hintergrund und verwandte Literatur zu wissenschaftlichen Fachübersetzungen**

Seit der Antike bis in die Neuzeit haben Übersetzungen zur Verbreitung von wissenschaftlichen Ideen und Ergebnissen beigetragen (vgl. z. B. FABBRO 1988; MONTGOMERY 2000; PANTIN 2007; PLESCIA 2011, 2017; COLDIRON 2014; MANNING & OWEN 2018; OLOHAN 2018; GUTAS et al. 2022). Im Allgemeinen wurde im europäischen Raum die vernakuläre Wissenschaftskommunikation in Veröffentlichungen ab dem 17. Jhd. zunehmend üblicher. Englische Fachzeitschriften beispielsweise haben seit ihrem ersten Erscheinen in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jhd. immer wieder englische Übersetzungen von wissenschaftlichen Artikeln aus dem Lateinischen und aus verschiedenen modernen europäischen Sprachen verbreitet. Seitdem hat die zunehmende Anzahl der in wissenschaftlichen Publikationen verwendeten Sprachen, aber auch die internationale Vernetzung und Korrespondenz im wissenschaftlichen Bereich die Bedeutung von Fachübersetzungen gestärkt (TURNER 2008; FRANSEN 2017). In den ersten

englischsprachigen wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften wollten die Herausgeber bereits Informationen über wissenschaftliche Entwicklungen aus dem Ausland aufnehmen und ihrer Leserschaft zugänglich machen (BANKS 2018). Übersetzungen wissenschaftlicher Artikel, welche durch die Herausgeber von Zeitschriften wie den *Philosophical Transactions* bzw. durch die Royal Society in Auftrag gegeben wurden, können einerseits als eine Form der sozialen und wissenschaftlichen Anerkennung für die Autoren gesehen werden und andererseits als ein Mittel zur weiteren Ausrichtung der Zeitschriften (vgl. SCHÖGLER 2020). Zeitschriften wie das *Journal des Sçavants* und die *Philosophical Transactions* beispielsweise veröffentlichten ausgewählte Beiträge der jeweils anderen Zeitschrift in der französischen bzw. englischen Übersetzung. Das bekannteste Beispiel von Übersetzungen in den Zeitschriften der Londoner Royal Society sind sicherlich die Texte von Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, die aus dem Niederländischen von Henry Oldenburg, dem Sekretär der Royal Society und damaligen Herausgeber der *Philosophical Transactions*, oder dem Übersetzer John Chamberlayne ins Englische übersetzt wurden, s. z. B. Van Leeuwenhoek (1722 a [handschriftliches Original], b [handschriftliche Übersetzung], c [gedruckte Übersetzung]).

Die Fachübersetzungen in den Zeitschriften der Londoner Royal Society sind bisher nicht umfassend und korpusbasiert untersucht worden. Die wenigen Studien, die hierzu durchgeführt wurden, konzentrieren sich auf eine geringe Anzahl bestimmter Texte, die in ihrer Gesamtheit auf ihre textuellen Eigenschaften hin untersucht und teilweise mit ihren Ausgangstexten im *Journal des Sçavants* verglichen wurden (BANKS 2018, 2019 a / b, 2021, 2023). Französische Übersetzungen von englischen Artikeln der aus den *Philosophical Transactions* im 17. und 18. Jhd. wurden auch von Turner (2008) untersucht. Die erste Ausgabe der *Philosophical Transactions* im Jahre 1665 beinhaltet bereits übersetzte Passagen aus einer Rezension über ein Buch, welche vorher auf Französisch im *Journal des Sçavants* erschienen war. Henry Oldenburg als Sekretär der Royal Society und damaliger Herausgeber der *Philosophical Transactions* hatte die englische Version selbst angefertigt, aber auch zusätzliche Informationen zum Text hinzugefügt, bestimmte Passagen gekürzt und die Struktur insgesamt etwas verändert (cf. BANKS 2018). Texte wie dieser sehr stark bearbeitete und veränderte Texte werden in der Untersuchung der RSC-Texte nicht in die Analyse mit einbezogen und sie sind im RSC auch nicht als Übersetzung ausgewiesen. Es gibt einige Texte im Royal Society Corpus, welche ins Englische übersetzte Passagen oder ganze übersetzte Texte innerhalb anderer Texte enthalten, z. B. übersetzte Briefe, die in originalsprachliche englische Texte eingebettet sind. Diese sind aber nicht Gegenstand der vorliegenden Untersuchung.

Banks (2021) hat insgesamt in Bezug auf die frühen Übersetzungen in den *Philosophical Transactions* aus der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jhd. festgestellt, dass die englischen Übersetzungen den Strukturen der Ausgangstexte prinzipiell relativ genau folgen, während die französischen Übersetzungen der englischen Texte, welche im *Journal des Sçavants* publiziert wurden, in der Regel deutlich kürzer als ihre Ausgangstexte waren und auch durch größere Umstrukturierungen gekennzeichnet sind, was vermutlich mit der damaligen Ausrichtung der französischen Fachzeitschrift auf ein breiteres

Zielpublikum zusammenhängt. Weitere Gründe für die damals tendenziell stärkeren Bearbeitungen im Französischen als Zielsprache können das unterschiedliche Selbstverständnis der Übersetzer<sup>6</sup> und die verschiedenen Übersetzungskulturen im englisch- und französischsprachigen Raum sein. Im o. g. Projekt zu Wissenschaftsübersetzungen in Frankreich wurde festgestellt, dass die französische Wissenschaftsübersetzung in der Frühen Neuzeit eine Praxis mit eigenen Standards und Vertextungsverfahren ausgebildet hat.<sup>7</sup> Es wurde gezeigt, dass zumindest die französischen Übersetzer damals weit über die Aufgabe von reinem Wissenstransfer hinausgingen. Da die Übersetzer von Fachtexten meist selbst Wissenschaftler waren, kommentieren sie in französischen Fachübersetzungen häufig die jeweils andere Position und versuchten sie zu widerlegen. Sie waren bestrebt, mit Hilfe von Übersetzungen von ihnen selbst unterstützte Positionen in den wissenschaftlichen Diskurs einzubringen. Häufig traten in den Übersetzungen auch nationale Argumentationsmuster als Folge von wissenschaftlicher Konkurrenz mit dem Ausland auf.<sup>8</sup>

Neben den o. g. qualitativen Studien von Banks zu einer kleineren Auswahl von Fachartikelübersetzungen in den *Philosophical Transactions* im 17. Jhd. gibt es nur wenig Literatur über die Übersetzungspraktiken der Royal Society. Als eine der wenigen Quellen hierzu ist noch Henderson (2013) zu nennen. Sie hat Übersetzungen, die seit der Gründung der Royal Society in den 1660er Jahren bis ca. 1730 im Auftrag der Royal Society zu verschiedenen Zwecken angefertigt wurden, untersucht. Grundlage hierfür war Archivmaterial der Royal Society, z. B. Sitzungsprotokolle oder Akten mit eingegangenen Briefen oder Manuskripten. Zu dieser Zeit wurde noch einiges auf Latein notiert und eingereicht. Neben Englisch als Hauptsprache war Französisch die am häufigsten genutzte Vernakularsprache in den Unterlagen. Die Royal Society ließ in dieser Zeit englische Übersetzungen für verschiedene Dokumentarten anfertigen, z. B. für Briefe, Forschungsberichte und Bücher, damit diese bei den internen Besprechungen verwendet oder in Akten wie dem *Register Book* archiviert werden konnten. Henderson (2013: 107) fand insgesamt, dass sich die Übersetzer bei diesen Übersetzungen prinzipiell stark an den Ausgangstexten orientiert hatten, aber bisweilen doch auch gewisse Anpassungen vornahmen, um die Texte besser auf dieses spezielle Zielpublikum und den internen Gebrauch in der Royal Society auszurichten. Abgesehen von den Ergebnissen der oben genannten Studien, ist wenig bekannt über die Übersetzungen aus dem Kontext der Royal Society, insbesondere über diejenigen, die in ihren Zeitschriften erschienen sind.

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<sup>6</sup> Um die Genauigkeit der als Übersetzungen im RSC gekennzeichneten Artikel eindeutig beurteilen zu können, müsste man die Ausgangstexte heranziehen, was im Fall der veröffentlichten Übersetzungen in den Fachzeitschriften der Royal Society in der Regel nur sehr schwer möglich wäre. Man müsste hierzu vermutlich die handschriftlichen Manuskripte aus den Archivakten der Royal Society als Vergleich heranziehen und qualitativ untersuchen.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.spp2130.de/index.php/wissenschaftsuebersetzungenii/> (28.12.2024).

<sup>8</sup> <https://presse.uni-mainz.de/deutsche-forschungsgemeinschaft-foerdert-projekt-zu-wissenschaftsuebersetzungen-in-frankreich-im-17-18-jahrhundert/> (28.12.2024).

## Die Identifizierung von Übersetzungen im RSC

Für die Identifizierung von englischen übersetzten Artikeln aus Fachzeitschriften wie den *Philosophical Transactions* und den *Proceedings* der Royal Society of London, welche im Royal Society Corpus enthalten sind, sind die zugehörigen Metadaten der Texte sehr hilfreich. Das RSC 6.0 enthält beispielsweise strukturellen Annotationen zu den jeweiligen Textüberschriften, sodass man die Überschriften gezielt zu Information zum Übersetzungsstatus von Artikeln durchsuchen kann. Die Überschriften beinhalten in vielen Fällen neben dem eigentlichen Titel des jeweiligen Artikels die Information, dass es sich um eine Übersetzung handelt. Manchmal enthält die Überschrift zudem auch Angaben zur jeweilige Ausgangsprache und / oder die Initialen, den Nachnamen oder Vor- und Nachnamen der Person, welche die Übersetzung angefertigt hat.

Die Beispiele (1) und (2) sind Überschriften von übersetzten Artikeln, welche in den *Philosophical Transactions* im Jahre 1733 bzw. 1751 erschienen sind.

(1) *Proposals for the Improvement of the History of Russia [...] Printed at St. Petersburg, for the Imperial Academy of Sciences. By Ger. Fred. Muller, Prof. Hist. Petropol. and F. R. S. Translated from the German by Mr. Zolman* (Text-ID im RSC: 10.1098/rstl.1733.0028)<sup>9</sup>

(2) *Experiments made on a great number of living animals, with the poison of lamas, and of ticunas, by Mons. Herissant, Doctor of Physic, and F. R. S. Translated from the French, by Tho. Stack, M. D.* (Text-ID im RSC: 10.1098/rstl.1751.0013)<sup>10</sup>

Des Weiteren kann man die erweiterten Metadaten, welche in der Korpusversion RSC 7.0, enthalten sind, heranziehen. Die Kategorie *Author roles* ist dort für die Texte annotiert und bietet für viele Texte Informationen zum Status der am jeweiligen Artikel beteiligten Person(en) (z. B. Autor, Reviewer, Übersetzer). Diese Rollen wurden von einem externen Annotationsdienstleister manuell im Auftrag der Royal Society in ihre Daten eingefügt. Bei der Erstellung der Korpusversion RSC 7.0 wurden sie den Metadaten der Korpus Texte hinzugefügt.

162 Texte im RSC enthalten Informationen darüber, dass sie Übersetzungen sind, in ihren jeweiligen Überschriften. Bei 126 Texten enthalten die Metadaten einen Hinweis auf beteiligte Übersetzer in der Form von Initialen, Nachname oder Vor- und Nachname der entsprechenden Person, wobei es sich nicht bei all diesen Texten um Übersetzungen ins Englische handelt. Dennoch sind diese 126 Texte zu einem großen Teil auch die Texte, die bereits, wie oben beschrieben, über die Überschriften identifiziert wurden. Auf der Basis der Informationen aus den Überschriften der Artikel und der Metadaten zu den Rollen der am Text beteiligten Personen lassen sich insgesamt 198 verschiedenen Übersetzungen zwischen 1668 und 1991 identifizieren, welche fast aus

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<sup>9</sup> s. auch Artikels im PDF-Format auf der Seite der Royal Society:  
<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstl.1733.0028> (28.12.2024).

<sup>10</sup> <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstl.1751.0013> (28.12.2024).

dem gesamten Zeitraum stammen, den das RSC abdeckt. Wie oben bereits angemerkt gibt es zusätzlich auch Texte in den Daten, welche ins Englische übersetzte Passagen oder ganze übersetzte Texte enthalten, z. B. übersetzte Briefe, die in originalsprachliche englische Texte eingebettet sind, aber sie sind nicht Gegenstand der vorliegenden Untersuchung.

Der Hauptanteil der Texte, die sich im Royal Society Corpus als Übersetzungen identifizieren lassen, stammt aus dem 18. Jhd. (s. Abb. 1) – aus einer Zeit, in das Übersetzen von Wissenschaftstexten in Europa auch eine gewisse Rolle als Mittel der nationalen Selbstbehauptung spielte (MANNWEILER 2024 a).

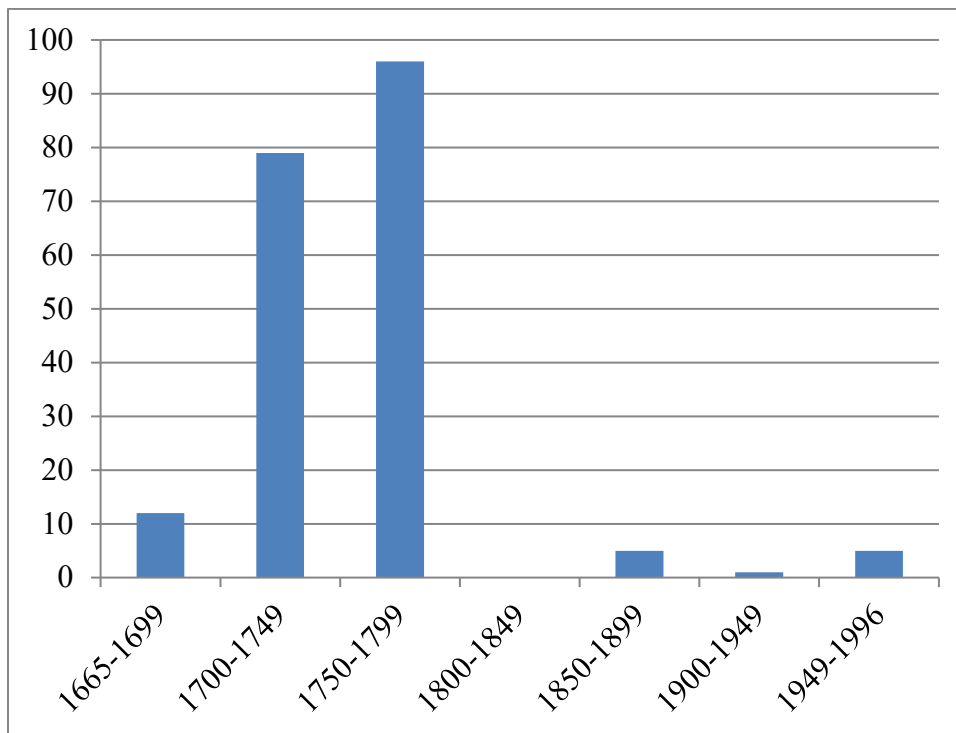


Abb. 1: Übersetzte Fachartikel pro 50-Jahres-Abschnitt (RSC 7.0)

Mehr als 10 Übersetzungen in den Daten stammen bereits aus der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jhd. Zwischen 1700 und 1749 lassen sich 79 publizierte Übersetzungen in den Daten finden, und in den Daten aus der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jhd. beläuft sich die Anzahl auf 96. Vor allem in der Zeit zwischen den 1720ern und den 1770ern wurden sehr viele dieser Übersetzungen angefertigt, und zwar 169 der insgesamt 198 identifizierten Texte. Sie erschienen zumeist in den *Philosophical Transactions*. Im Zeitraum von 1800 bis 1849 lassen sich mit den Informationen aus dem RSC keine als Übersetzungen markierten Texte zu finden. In den drei anschließenden 50-Jahre-Zeitabschnitten im 19. und 20. Jhd. lassen sich nur vereinzelt Übersetzungen finden. Im 20. Jhd. erschienen diese meist in den *Proceedings*. Mannweiler (2024 b) erklärt das allgemein beobachtbare drastische Zurückgehen von Übersetzungen in Fachzeitschriften im 19. Jahrhundert durch mehrere Faktoren. Einerseits sei die Leserschaft zunehmend an originalen wissenschaftlichen Schriften interessiert gewesen, u. a auch weil sich die nationalen Öffentlichkeitsphären verändert hatten. Andererseits habe auch die Zeitver-

zögerung, die durch Übersetzungen entsteht, eine Rolle gespielt. Schließlich sei mit der Entwicklung des wissenschaftlichen Artikels, der den aktuellen Stand der Forschung zu einem bestimmten Thema idealerweise auf einer transnationalen Ebene darstellt, die Übersetzungsaktivität in einem gewissen Maße auf die Autoren der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten selbst übergegangen.

Es gibt unter den 198 identifizierten englischen Übersetzungen im RSC einige wenige Texte, die im Anschluss an die eigentliche Übersetzung auch den dazugehörigen Ausgangstext beinhalten. Diese zweisprachig publizierten Fachartikel werden jedoch in der korpuslinguistischen Analyse der Texte aus dem 18. Jhd. in Abschnitt 6 vorerst nicht mitberücksichtigt, da sie in den meisten RSC-Versionen, wie z. B. RSC 6.0, nicht mehr enthalten sind, damit eine höhere Qualität der auf das Englische ausgerichteten linguistischen Annotationen gewährleistet wird. In den meisten Fällen sind die Ausgangstexte der übersetzten Artikel nicht in den Zeitschriftenartikeln – und damit natürlich auch nicht im RSC – enthalten. Zahlreiche unter ihnen sollten sich zumindest jeweils als digital verfügbare Scans von handschriftlichen, nicht-englischsprachigen Manuskripten über den Katalog der Royal Society<sup>11</sup> auffinden lassen. In der jetzigen Form kann man die Ausgangstexte allerdings nicht direkt und systematisch mit den veröffentlichten Übersetzungen vergleichen (s. hierzu Abschnitt 7).

### **Ausgangssprachen und Textthemen**

Es handelt sich bei den identifizierten 198 Texten um englische Übersetzungen aus verschiedenen Ausgangssprachen, welche man bei der Mehrzahl der Artikel anhand der Überschriften ermitteln kann. Die frühesten Übersetzungen im RSC aus dem 17. Jhd. sind meist Übersetzungen aus dem Französischen oder auch aus dem Italienischen. 102 der Texte sind als Übersetzungen aus dem Französischen gekennzeichnet, und 12 enthalten Informationen darüber, dass sie Übersetzungen aus dem Italienischen sind (Abb. 2).

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<sup>11</sup> s. <https://makingscience.royalsociety.org/search> und <https://catalogues.royalsociety.org/CalmView> (28.12.2024).

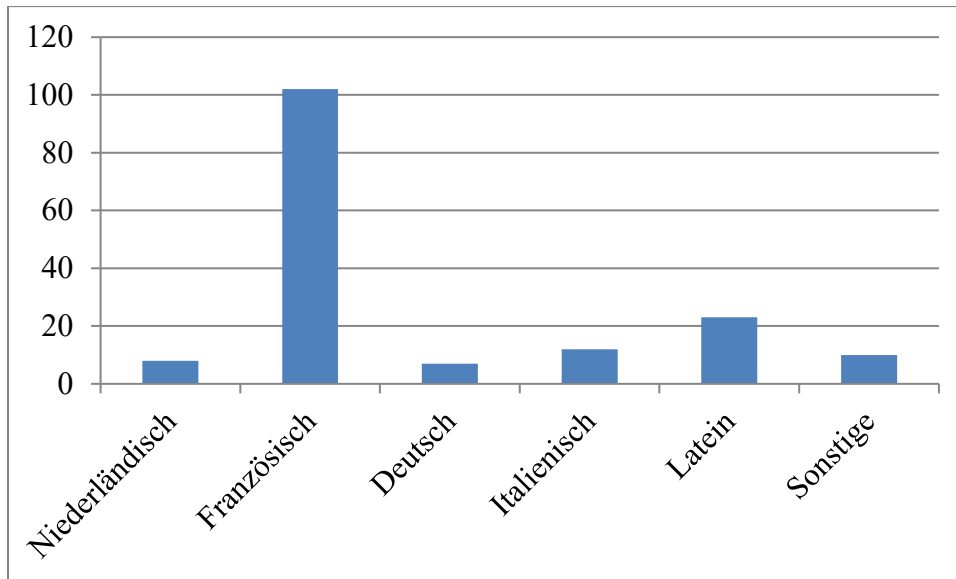


Abb. 2: Anzahl der Übersetzungen im RSC mit Angaben zur Ausgangssprache in den Überschriften der Artikel

Im 17. und 18. Jhd. wurden zahlreiche Manuskripte bei der Royal Society immer noch auf Latein eingereicht. Mehr als 400 Zeitschriftenbeiträge, die Teil des RSC sind, wurden direkt auf Latein publiziert, z. B. ein Text des schwedischen Astronomen Pehr Wilhelm Wargentin aus dem Jahr 1766 (Text-ID: 105507).<sup>12</sup> Unter den Übersetzungen, die explizite Angaben zu ihrer Ausgangssprache enthalten, lassen sich 23 englische Übersetzungen von auf Latein eingereichten Artikeln ermittelt. Somit ist Latein bei diesen 198 übersetzten Texten die zweithäufigste Ausgangssprache. 8 Texte enthalten Informationen über das Niederländische als Ausgangssprache. Nur 7 Texte wurden aus dem Deutschen übersetzt (in den älteren Texten manchmal als *High Dutch* bezeichnet). Das RSC enthält mehr englische Übersetzungen von lateinischen Texten, die von deutschsprachigen Autoren verfasst wurden, als Übersetzungen aus dem Deutschen. Andere Ausgangssprachen der Übersetzungen im RSC sind Arabisch, Chinesisch, Spanisch, Persisch und Russisch. Die Ausgangssprache der eingereichten Texte ist nicht immer die Muttersprache der Autoren, nicht nur im Fall von Latein als Ausgangssprache. Die RSC enthält beispielsweise einen ursprünglich auf Französisch verfassten Brief des italienischen Kartographen Rizzi Zannoni, der 1768 in den *Philosophical Transactions* in einer englischen Übersetzung von Mathew Maty veröffentlicht wurde (Text-ID: 105778). In den Fällen, in denen keine Ausgangssprache für den jeweiligen Artikel angegeben ist, kann diese häufig dennoch durch eine genauere Analyse der Überschriften bestimmt werden. Manchmal wird z. B. der Titel

<sup>12</sup> Die Zeitschriften der Royal Society enthalten auch einige vollständige Texte und kleinere Passagen in anderen Sprachen als Englisch oder Latein, z. B. einen Fachartikel in Form eines Briefes zum Thema Astronomie von Jean Dominique Cassini aus den 1680er Jahren auf Französisch (101887), einen umfangreichen italienischen Fachartikel des Physikers Alessandro Volta aus den 1780er Jahren (106459) und einen deutschen Text des Physikers Georg Hermann Quincke aus den 1890er Jahren (rspl\_1886\_0111). Die Metadaten im RSC 7.0 enthalten Informationen zur Textsprache in Form eines zweistelligen ISO 639-Codes (en, fr, es, la, it, sv, ro), aber die Artikel, deren Hauptsprache nicht Englisch ist, wurden aus den meisten Korpusversionen entfernt.

des Ausgangstextes im Original mit erwähnt oder sein Entstehungsort. Auch Angaben zur Identität des Übersetzers können Hinweise darauf geben, was die Ausgangssprache eines Textes war.

Die meisten Übersetzungen waren direkte Übersetzungen. Beispiel (3) aus der 1. Hälfte des 18. Jhd. ist eine Ausnahme im RSC als indirekte Übersetzungen über mehrere Brückensprachen. Der Text war aus dem Chinesischen erst ins Lateinische, dann ins Französische und schließlich ins Englische übersetzt worden.

(3) *An Explanation of the New Chronological Table of the Chinese History, Translated into Latin from the Original Chinese, by Father Johannes Franciscus Foucquet, Soc. Jes. Bishop of Eleutheropolis, and Published at Rome in the Year 1730. Collected from Two Accounts Thereof, Written in French, One Sent from Rome by Sir Tho. Dereham, Bart. to the Royal Society, the Other Sent from Father Foucquet to Father Eustache Guillemeau, a Barnabite at Paris, and by Him Transmitted to Sir Hans Sloane, Bart. Pr. R. S (Text-ID: 103551)*

Aus den Informationen zu den Textthemen in den Metadaten der RSC-Texte (6.0.4), welche über ein Topic-Modelling-Verfahren gewonnen wurden (FISCHER et al. 2018), können wir schließen, in welchen Bereichen, die in den Zeitschriften vertreten sind, die meisten Übersetzungen erforderlich waren. Tabelle 1 zeigt eine Übersicht über die Hauptthemen<sup>13</sup> der übersetzten Texte.

Textthemen	Anzahl der Texte
Astronomie	29
Biologie	42
Chemie	15
Reporting/Berichterstattung	88
Sonstiges bzw. k. A.	24

Tabelle 1: Textthemen der übersetzten Texte im RSC (6.0.4)

Die Hauptthemen der übersetzten Texte waren Astronomie, Biologie, Chemie und Reporting/Berichterstattung (ein breiteres Themenlabel, das Texten aus verschiedenen Disziplinen zugeordnet wurde, die Berichte über wissenschaftliche Beobachtungen oder Experimente enthalten).

### Übersetzer

Die Übersetzungen der naturwissenschaftlichen Texte, die sich im RSC finden lassen, wurden in der Regel auch von Naturwissenschaftlern angefertigt. Ein Beispiel für eine der Übersetzungen im RSC aus dem 20. Jhd. ist ein wissenschaftlicher Nachruf auf Jewgeni Michailowitsch Lifschiz von Yakov Borisovich Zeldovich and M. I. Kaganov in der Zeitschrift *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* – ein Fachtext, der von

<sup>13</sup> Metadatenkategorie: Primary topic

dem Physiker und OED<sup>14</sup>-Lexikografen John Bradbury Sykes aus dem Russischen übersetzt wurde (Text-ID: rsbm\_1990\_0035). Sykes war vorher als Übersetzer an der englischen Ausgabe des 10 Bände umfassenden Lehrbuchs der theoretischen Physik (*Course of theoretical physics*) von Landau und Lifschiz beteiligt gewesen. Frauen sind in den RSC-Texten nicht als Übersetzerinnen in Erscheinung getreten, abgesehen von einer Ausnahme. Obwohl die historische Bedeutung von Frauen als Übersetzerinnen von wissenschaftlichen Texten hervorgehoben wurde, z. B. von Healy (2004), Kawashima (2011) und Olohan (2012), lässt sich in allen identifizierten Übersetzungen im RSC nur eine einzige Übersetzung finden, von der wir mit Sicherheit sagen können, dass sie von einer Frau erstellt wurde. Es handelt sich um einen Artikel aus dem Bereich Physik, der von Rosemarie Teare aus dem Deutschen ins Englische übersetzt wurde und der 1980 in den *Proceedings A* veröffentlicht wurde (rspa\_1980\_0064). Aus den Übersetzungen im RSC lässt sich schließen, dass die Royal Society in einem gewissen Umfang finanzielle und personelle Ressourcen zur Anfertigung von Übersetzungen von Texten von auswärtigen Mitgliedern (*Foreign Members*) und anderen ausländischen Wissenschaftlern zur Verfügung stellte, was auch aus anderen Quellen hervorgeht (z. B. GADDUM 1956). Der russische Physiologe Iwan Pawlow beispielsweise bedankte sich 1928 in einer von ihm vor der Royal Society gehaltenen *Croonian Lecture* (rspb\_1928\_0027) für einen solchen finanziellen Zuschuss für eine englische Ausgabe seines neusten Werkes (und zwar PAWLOV 1927, übersetzt von Gleb Anrep).<sup>15</sup> Das Veröffentlichen von Fachzeitschriften stellte in der Vergangenheit häufig keine bedeutende Einnahmequelle dar und deckte die Produktionskosten nicht annähernd (FYFE 2015). Verschiedene Übersetzungen von Fachartikeln für die Zeitschriften der Royal Society wurden vermutlich auf ehrenamtlicher Basis angefertigt von Personen aus dem Netzwerk der Herausgeber, wie es auch Olohan (2012) festgestellt hat im Fall einer anderen wissenschaftlichen Fachzeitschrift aus dem 19. Jhd. Einige Autoren reichten möglicherweise auch die zu ihrem Manuskript dazugehörige englische Übersetzung direkt mit ein.

Viele Übersetzungen der Texte im RSC wurden jedoch von Sekretären der Royal Society während ihrer Amtstätigkeit angefertigt (z. B. Thomas Birch). Zu Beginn des 18. Jhd., in den 1720er Jahren, richtete die Royal Society mit dem Sekretär für auswärtige Angelegenheiten ein spezielles Amt für die Bearbeitung der zunehmend umfangreichen Auslandskorrespondenz ein (ursprünglich als *Assistant to the Secretaries for Foreign Correspondence* bezeichnet, später als *Foreign Secretary*), s. Massarella (1992). Daher nahm seit dieser Zeit auch die Anzahl von Übersetzungen in den Daten im 18. Jhd. zu. Die erste Person, die dieses Amt innehatte, war der deutsche Kartograf Philipp Heinrich Zollmann. Wissenschaftler wie Zollman mit herausragenden fremdsprachlichen Kenntnissen, die auch zeitweise selbst im Ausland lebten, konnten eine Vielzahl von internationalen Kontakten pflegen und zum Ausbau des internationalen Netz-

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<sup>14</sup> Oxford English Dictionary

<sup>15</sup> Der in den *Philosophical Transactions* übersetzte Text dieser *Croonian Lecture* war auch eine Übersetzung von Anrep, einem Royal Society Fellow, der in seinen frühen Jahren vor seiner Emigration nach England bei Pawlow studiert hatte.

werkes der Royal Society beitragen, vgl. Rusnock (1999: 159). Philipp Heinrich Zollmann zum Beispiel stand, wie sein Vater Johann Ludwig Zollmann, in regelmäßigem Kontakt mit Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. Zollmann begleitete auch Mitglieder der britischen königlichen Familie bei ihren Besuchen in Deutschland und arbeitete zeitweise für den britischen Botschafter in Paris (MASSARELLA 1992). Während Zollmanns Abwesenheit wurde das Amt des Auslandskorrespondenten der Royal Society Ende der 1720er Jahre von dem Schweizer Naturforscher Johann Caspar Scheuchzer ausgeübt. Scheuchzer übersetzte zum Beispiel einen Artikel über die Ursachen der Gicht aus dem Italienischen ins Englische (Text-ID: 103707). Laut Mitgliederverzeichnis der Royal Society, dem *Fellows Directory*,<sup>16</sup> hatte Zollmann sein Amt von 1723-1728 inne, aber von Zollmann übersetzte Artikel sind im RSC bis zu seinem Todesjahr 1748 zu finden. Danach wurde der englische Arzt Thomas Stack die hauptverantwortliche Person für die Auslandskorrespondenz der Royal Society. Zwischen 1729 und 1751 fertigte Stack fast ein Viertel der knapp 200 Übersetzungen an, die im RSC identifiziert wurden. Zu den weiteren Sekretären für auswärtige Angelegenheiten der Royal Society, die Übersetzungen für Zeitschriften wie die *Philosophical Transactions* anfertigten, zählte z. B. John Bevis (*Foreign Secretary* [For. Sec.] 1766-1771).

Tabelle 2 gibt einen Überblick über die Übersetzer, von denen wir aus der Analyse der RSC-Texte schließen können, dass sie mehr als fünf Übersetzungen von wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriftenartikeln angefertigt haben. Sie waren alle selbst Wissenschaftler und Mitglieder der Royal Society.<sup>17</sup> Die meisten von ihnen waren eine Zeit lang *Foreign Secretary* der Royal Society, aber sie fertigten in mehreren Fällen auch Übersetzungen für Zeitschriften wie die *Philosophical Transactions* in Zeiten an, in denen sie dieses Amt nicht innehatten.

Übersetzer	Zeitraum, in dem die Übersetzungen veröffentlicht wurden	Anzahl der Texte	Ausgangssprache(n)
Zollman, Philipp Heinrich (F.R.S. <sup>18</sup> seit 1727; For. Sec. 1723-1728)	1729-1748	19	Französisch, Deutsch, Latein
Stack, Thomas (F.R.S. seit 1738; For. Sec. 1748-1751)	1729-1751	44	Französisch, Italienisch, Latein

<sup>16</sup> <https://catalogues.royalsociety.org/CalmView/personsearch.aspx?src=CalmView.Persons> (28.12.2024)

<sup>17</sup> Zollmann war zu Beginn seiner Übersetzertätigkeit für die Royal Society noch kein Fellow, was vielleicht auf seine regelmäßige Korrespondenz mit Leibniz zurückzuführen ist, einem Rivalen von Isaac Newton, der bis 1727 Präsident der Royal Society war. Im Jahr 1727, als Newton von Hans Sloane als neuer Präsident der Royal Society abgelöst wurde, wurde Zollmann dann zum Fellow der Royal Society gewählt.

<sup>18</sup> Fellow of the Royal Society

Watson, William (F.R.S. seit 1741)	1742-1755	10	Französisch, Italienisch, Latein, Spanisch
Parsons, James (F.R.S. seit 1741; For. Sec. 1751-1762)	1751-1764	8	Französisch, Latein
Maty, Mathew (F.R.S. seit 1752; For. Sec. 1762-1766)	1755-1774	12	Französisch
Andere oder k. A. (insgesamt)	1668-1991	105	Arabisch, Chinesisch, Niederländisch, Französisch, Deutsch, Italienisch, Latein, Persisch, Russisch

Tabelle 2: Übersetzer von Texten im RSC, die mehr als 5 Übersetzungen angefertigt haben

Die Metadatenkategorie *Author roles* und die Überschriften der Artikel im RSC 7.0 enthalten für mehr als 60 % der 198 Übersetzungen Hinweise auf die Identität der Übersetzer. Dennoch bringen diese Angaben teilweise einen gewissen Aufwand bei der Bestimmung der Übersetzer der Texte mit sich. Die Schreibweise der Personennamen variiert in den Daten, und die Namen sind manchmal in ihrer ursprünglichen, latinisierten oder anglierten Version angegeben. Darüber hinaus werden die Namen der Übersetzer häufig nur mit ihren Initialen angegeben, manchmal auch in umgekehrter Reihenfolge. Wenn der Texttitel beispielsweise die Information enthält „...*Translated from the French by P. H. Z. F. R. S.*<sup>19</sup>“ oder „...*Translated from the French by T. S. M. D.*<sup>20</sup>*F. R. S.*“, so enthalten die Metadaten auch nur die Initialen P. H. Z. und T. S. als Übersetzerangaben.

Im RSC 7.0 sind Fellow-IDs in den Metadaten als eindeutige Identifikatoren für Royal Society Fellows enthalten (z. B. NA1848 für Zollman), was es vereinfacht, die an der Textentstehung beteiligten Personen zu bestimmen, auch wenn es verschiedene Schreibweisen für ihre Namen gibt. Die Fellow-IDs vereinfachen es auch, zwischen mehreren Personen, welche den gleichen Namen tragen, zu unterscheiden, z. B. zwischen dem Royal Society Fellow und Übersetzer William Watson (NA7588, siehe Tabelle 2) und verschiedenen anderen Fellows mit dem gleichen Namen. In einigen Fällen, in denen die Daten keine konkreten Angaben zum Übersetzer enthalten, lässt sich dennoch mit einem gewissen Grad an Sicherheit feststellen, von wem der Text übersetzt wurde. Wenn wir z. B. von einem Text aus den 1750er Jahren wissen, dass er von Thomas Birch als Sekretär der Royal Society aus dem Französischen ins Englische übersetzt wurde, so war Birch mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit auch der Übersetzer anderer französischer Artikel aus demselben Zeitraum. In der Textüberschrift in Beispiel (4) wird z. B nicht ausdrücklich erwähnt, dass der Text vom Textempfänger Birch selbst übersetzt wurde. Auch die ihm in den Metadaten zugewiesene Rolle ist „Empfänger“, aber nicht „Übersetzer“.

<sup>19</sup> P. H. Z. = Philip Henry Zol(l)man, F. R. S. = Fellow of the Royal Society

<sup>20</sup> T. S. = Thomas Stack, M. D. = Doctor of Medicine

(4) *An account of an earthquake felt at Colen, Leige, Maestricht, &c. on the 19th of November, 1756: in a letter from Mr. Abraham Trembley, F. R. S. to Thomas Birch, D. D. Secretary to the Royal Society. Translated from the French* (Text-ID: 105009)

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass die Fachübersetzungen im Royal Society Corpus in erster Linie von Wissenschaftlern angefertigt wurden, die Erfahrung im Übersetzen von Fachtexten hatten, aber Übersetzen nicht als ihre Haupttätigkeit ausübten. Die Übersetzer der Fachartikel im RSC waren häufig fachlich sehr eng verbunden mit den jeweiligen Autoren, für die sie die Übersetzungen anfertigten, oder sie hatten in einigen Fällen schon frühere Werke dieser Autoren ins Englische übersetzt. In vielen Fällen fertigen die Übersetzer die englischen Versionen der Zeitschriftenartikel im Rahmen ihres Aufgabenbereiches bei der Royal Society an.

### **Analyse zu Nomen+Nomen-Strukturen und verbalen Komplementstrukturen**

In diesem Abschnitt werden speziell die im ersten Schritt der Untersuchung identifizierten Übersetzungen aus dem 18. Jhd. im Hinblick auf ausgewählte Merkmale analysiert, da sie den größten Anteil der Übersetzungen im RSC ausmachen. In der folgenden Analyse werden sie nicht-übersetzten RSC-Texten aus dem gleichen Zeitraum gegenübergestellt. Der Vergleich dieser übersetzten Wissenschaftsartikel mit originalsprachlichen englischen Wissenschaftsartikeln aus dem gleichen Zeitraum dient zur Überprüfung der übersetzten Sprache in Bezug auf mögliche Übersetzungsuniversalien oder -normen (T-Universalien) im historischen Kontext. In der Analyse der Korpustexte soll hier überprüft werden, ob die Übersetzungen von einer übersetzungsspezifischen Normalisierungstendenz im Sinne einer eingeschränkteren Nutzung von sprachlich innovativen Merkmalen aus der Zeit von Late Modern English gekennzeichnet sind. Zu den innovativen linguistischen Strukturen, die während LModE generell und in Fachtexten an Häufigkeit zugenommen haben, gehören zum einen zunehmend komplexere Nominalstrukturen und Mehrwortausdrücke wie Nomen, die durch andere Nomen modifiziert und als *open compounds* verwendet werden (z. B. *antagonist muscles*), und zum anderen *-ing*-Komplemente nach Verben (z. B. *omit telling*), die zunehmend Funktionen von *to*-Infinitiven (z. B. *omit to tell*) übernommen haben. Die Übersetzungen sollten daher tendenziell weniger als *open compounds* verwendete Nomen+Nomen-Strukturen und weniger *-ing*-Ergänzungen nach Verben beinhalten als die originalsprachlichen Vergleichstexte, da es sich hier um für die damalige Zeit durchweg noch immer um relativ wenig gebräuchliche Strukturen handelte.

Neben dem Häufigkeitsvergleich für die o. g. Strukturen werden auch die im RSC annotierten Surprisalwerte für die untersuchten Konstruktionen untersucht (cf. Hale 2001, Levy 2008, Degaetano-Ortlieb & Teich 2022). Surprisal als informationstheoretisches Maß für die Informationsdichte und den Grad der (Un-)Vorhersagbarkeit von linguistischen Einheiten wurde im RSC für jedes Token berechnet und annotiert. Die Grundlage für die berechneten Werte ist folgende Formel, in welcher der Surprisalwert (S) eines Tokens (t) als der negative duale Logarithmus der Ereigniswahrscheinlichkeit

des Tokens definiert wird, wobei hier in einem 4-Gramm-Modell für jedes Token jeweils drei vorausgehenden Tokens als lokale Kontextelemente berücksichtigt werden:  $S(t_i) = -\log_2 p(t_i | (t_{i-1} \ t_{i-2} \ t_{i-3}))$ . Wörter mit hoher kontextueller Vorhersagbarkeit sind tendenziell durch niedrige Surprisalwerte gekennzeichnet, während Wörter mit geringer kontextueller Vorhersagbarkeit höhere Surprisalwerte haben.

Die englischsprachigen Übersetzungen aus dem 18. Jhd. (mit Ausnahme der mehrsprachigen Texte darunter, welche sowohl Original als auch Übersetzung enthalten) werden hier als spezielles Subkorpus betrachtet (463.153 Tokens, 168 Texte). Diese Textauswahl wird mit einem weiteren RSC-Subkorpus aus zufällig ausgewählten nicht-übersetzten Artikeln aus demselben Zeitraum verglichen (463.210 Tokens, 216 Texte).<sup>21</sup> Die Übersetzungen und das Subkorpus mit den nicht-übersetzten Texten aus dem 18. Jhd. werden mit CQPweb (Hardie 2012) abgefragt nach Häufigkeitsinformationen zu Nomen+Nomen-Strukturen, die als *open compounds* verwendet werden, und zu *-ing*-Komplementen und *to*-Infinitivergänzungen nach Verben, welche mit beiden Varianten in den LModE-Texten vorkommen (wie das oben erwähnte *omit*, aber z. B. auch *attempt*, *continue*, *omit*, *pretend*, *propose*, *refuse*, *seem*).<sup>22</sup> Dann werden die Surprisalwerte der Bestandteile der Nominalkomposita und die Surprisalwerte der *-ing*-Formen und der Infinitive aus den beiden Subcorpora extrahiert und untersucht.

Abb. 3 zeigt die ermittelten Häufigkeiten von Nomen+Nomen-Strukturen, die als *open compounds* in den untersuchten Subcorpora vorkommen. Diese Strukturen kommen in den Übersetzungen geringfügig häufiger als in den nicht-übersetzten Texten vor, aber sie haben sich insgesamt noch zu keinem hochfrequenten Phänomen in den Fachartikeln der Royal Society aus dem 18. Jhd. etabliert.

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<sup>21</sup> Man könnte hier zusätzlich noch spezifischere Variablen in Bezug auf die Texte berücksichtigen, wie z. B. deren Themen, Länge, Übersetzerhintergrund oder die jeweilige Ausgangssprache. Es wäre auch möglich, bestimmte Zeitspannen innerhalb des 18. Jhd. in einer detaillierteren diachronen Untersuchung miteinander zu vergleichen. Für die Untersuchung dieser weiteren Variablen im Detail in einer quantitativen Untersuchung wäre hier jedoch ein größerer Datensatz mit mehr Vorkommen der untersuchten Strukturen vorteilhaft. Es sollte außerdem beachtet werden, dass diese spezifischeren Kategorien in der aktuellen Textauswahl nicht gleichmäßig verteilt sind und manche dadurch möglicherweise überrepräsentiert sein könnten.

<sup>22</sup> Während die Abfragen für *-ing*-Komplemente und *to*-Infinitive nach Verben nur geringfügig verfeinert werden musste, um mögliche irrelevante Muster auszuschließen, waren bei den Abfragen für Nomen+Nomen-Strukturen viele Einschränkungen in den Queries verbunden mit einer manuellen Analyse der notwendig, um eine große Anzahl und Vielfalt von solchen Sequenzen auszuschließen, die keine Komposita sind (z. B. ... *inches diameter*, ... *hours time*) oder die in diesen historischen Daten fälschlicherweise mit part-of-speech-Tags von Nomen versehen wurden (z. B. zahlreiche Fremdwörter und großgeschriebene Wörter anderer Wortarten). Substantivsequenzen, die Eigennamen enthalten, wurden nicht in diese Analyse einbezogen.

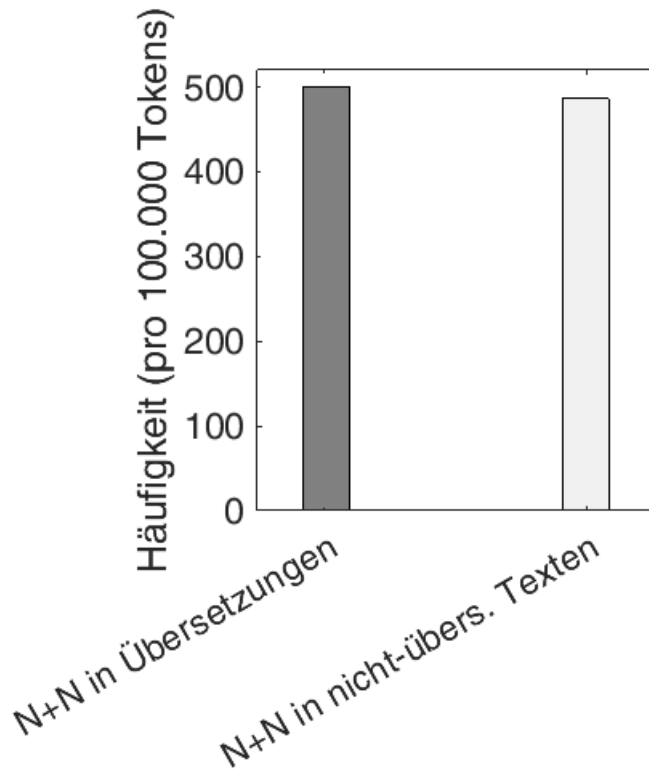


Abb. 3: Nomen+Nomen-Komposita in übersetzten und nicht-übersetzten Texten im RSC 6.0

In Abb. 4 wird die Verteilung der Surprisalwerte der Nomen aus diesen Kompositastrukturen in den beiden Subkorpora miteinander verglichen, wobei hier die Werte für die substantivischen Erst- und Zweitglieder zusammengefasst dargestellt werden. Die Verteilungen sehen ähnlich aus, aber der Median liegt bei 14,5 in den Übersetzungen und bei 13,2 in den nicht-übersetzten Texten. Dieser Unterschied ist statistisch signifikant, was wir aus den berechneten Kerbenintervallen („notches“) schließen können, die das Konfidenzintervall um den jeweiligen Median darstellen und sich hier nicht überlappen.<sup>23</sup> Dies deutet darauf hin, dass diese Strukturen in den Übersetzungen aus dem 18. Jhd. im Durchschnitt in weniger konventionellen und weniger gut vorhersagbaren Kontexten verwendet wurden als in den nicht-übersetzten Texten.

<sup>23</sup> <https://de.mathworks.com/help/stats/boxplot.html> (28.12.2024), vgl. auch Groß (2010: 121).

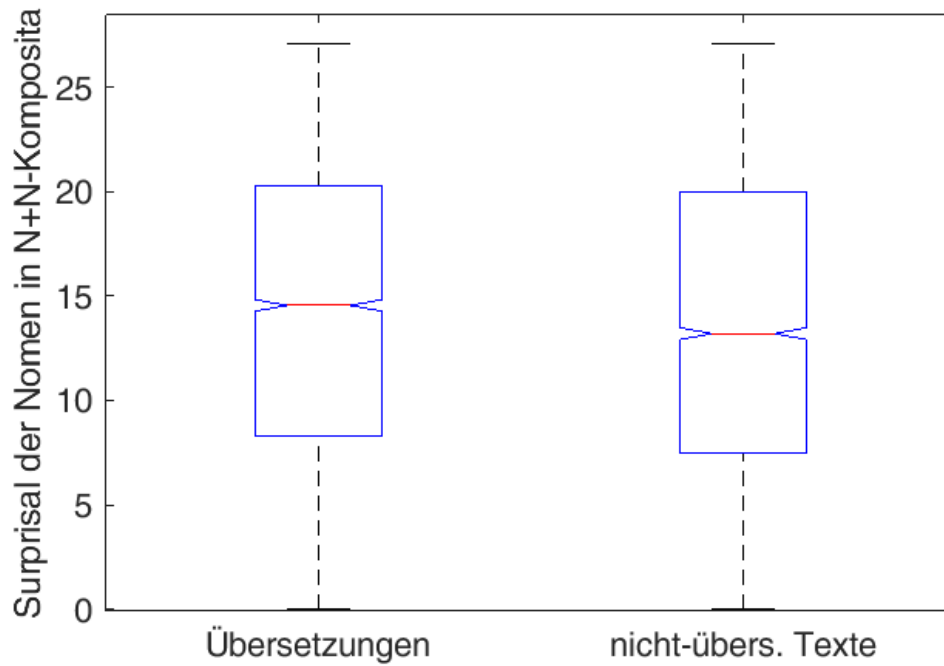


Abb. 4: Zusammengefasste Surprisalwerte der Nomen+Nomen-Komposita im RSC 6.0

Abb. 5 verdeutlicht die Häufigkeiten von *-ing*-Komplementen und *to*- Infinitivergänzungen nach Verben, welche mit beiden Varianten (*-ing*-Form und *to*-Infinitiv) in Texten aus den Subkorpora verwendet werden. Ergänzungsstrukturen mit *to*-Infinitiven werden insgesamt häufig in diesem Zeitraum gebraucht als *-ing*-Komplementstrukturen. Allerdings ist die traditionellere *to*-Infinitivergänzung in den nicht-übersetzten Texten häufiger zu finden als in den Übersetzungen, während *-ing*-Ergänzungen nach Verben als innovative, sich im LModE etablierende Variante häufiger in den Übersetzungen vorkommen.

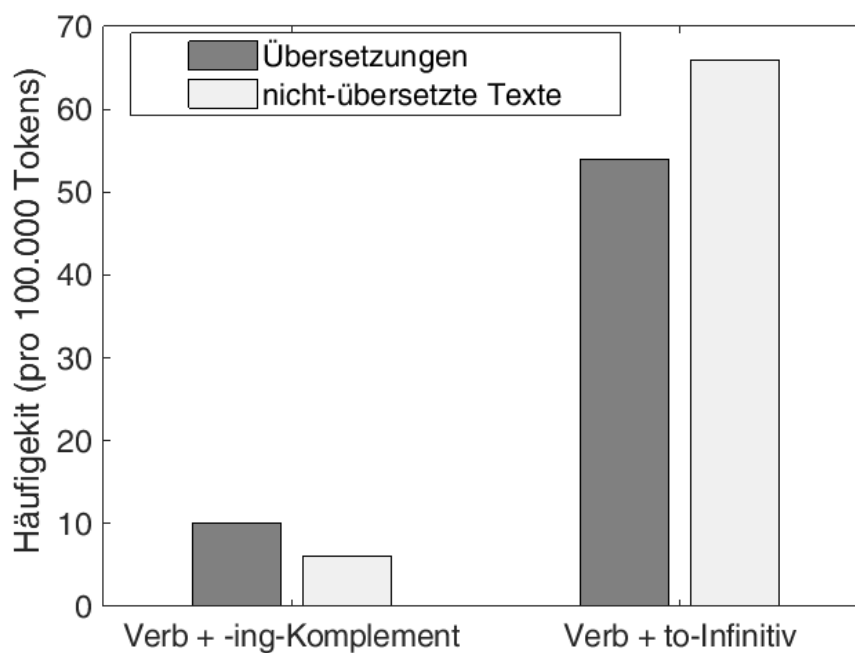


Abb. 5: Häufigkeiten von Verb + *-ing*-Form und Verb + *to*-Infinitiv im RSC 6.0

Die Surprisalanalyse der beiden Komplementstrukturen lässt hier keine ganz eindeutige Schlussfolgerung zu. Abb. 6 zeigt die Verteilung der Surprisalwerte von *-ing*-Formen und Infinitiven in verbalen Ergänzungen. Die Surprisalwerte der *-ing*-Formen sind in den originalsprachlichen Texten etwas höher, aber die Mediane unterscheiden sich nicht auf statistisch signifikante Weise, da die RSC-Texte aus dem 18. Jhd. noch nicht sehr viele Fälle für diese neueren Konstruktionen enthielten, wie aus der obigen Abb. 5 hervorgeht.

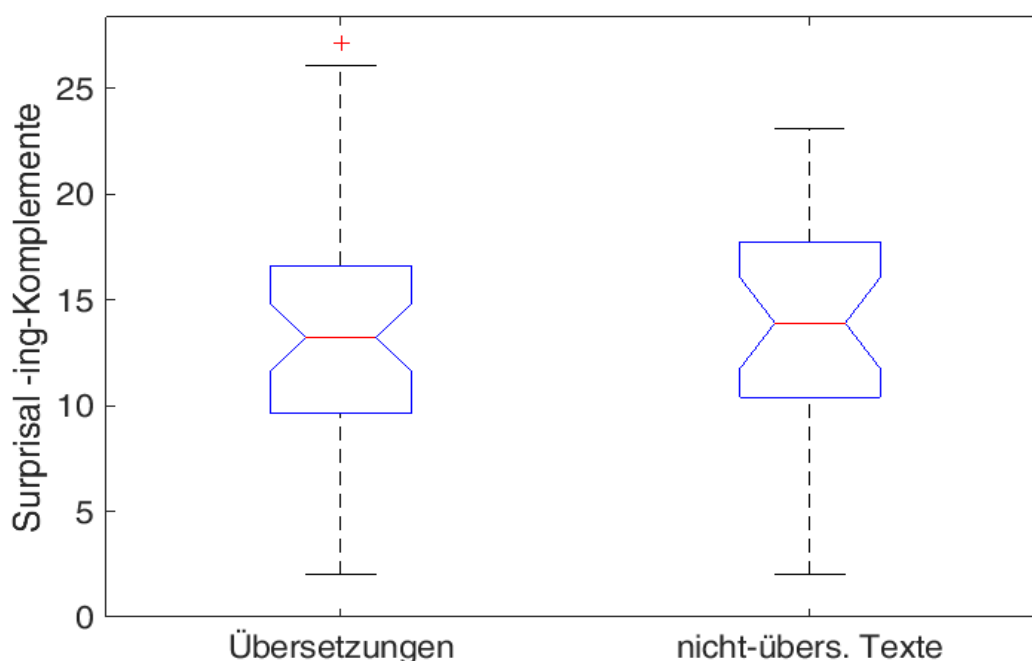


Abb. 6: Surprisalwerte von *-ing*-Formen in verbalen Ergänzungen im RSC 6.0

Die Boxplots in Abb. 7 zeigen, dass die Surprisalwerte der untersuchten Infinitive in den Übersetzungen im Allgemeinen höher sind als in den nicht-übersetzten Texten und dass sich die Mediane der beiden Verteilungen (6,5 in den Übersetzungen und 4,3 in den nicht-übersetzten Texten) auf statistisch signifikante Weise unterscheiden, was wir wieder aus den Kerbenintervallen schließen können, die sich in den beiden Verteilungen nicht überlappen. Dies deutet darauf hin, dass diese Formen, die in den Übersetzungen weniger häufig vorkommen als die *-ing*-Komplemente, in diesen übersetzten Texten nach weniger vorhersehbaren und weniger konventionalisierten vorangehenden Kontexten verwendet werden. Sie werden häufiger in den originalsprachlichen Texten verwendet und treten da in stärker vorhersehbaren und konventionalisierteren Kontexten auf, was zu einem geringeren kognitiven Verarbeitungsaufwand beitragen kann.

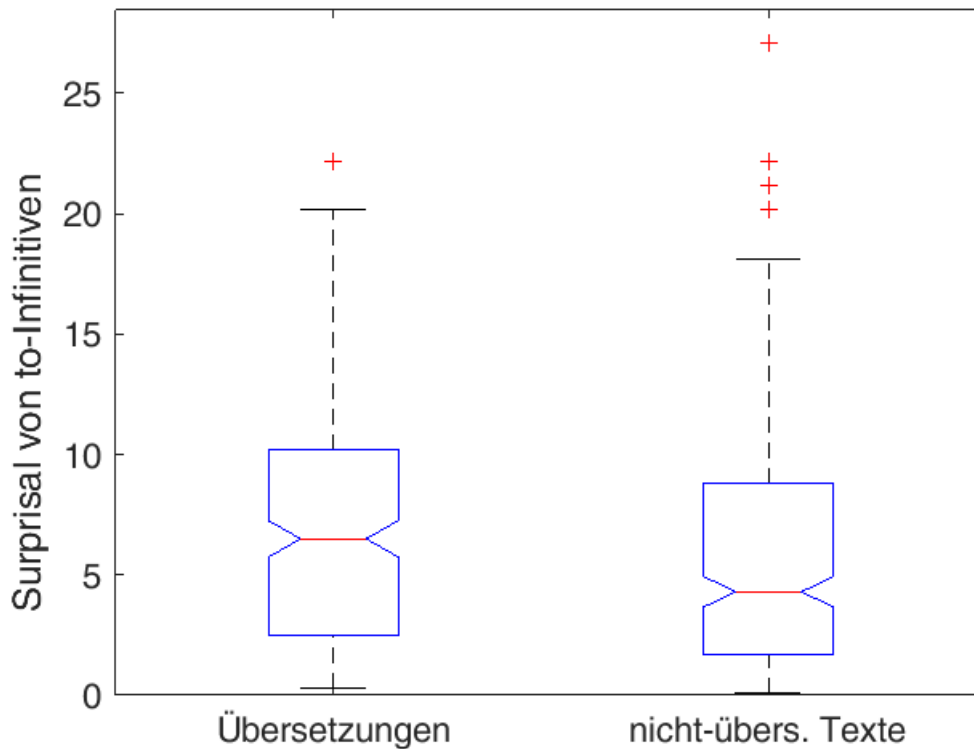


Abb. 7: Surprisal von *to*-Infinitiven in verbalen Ergänzungen im RSC 6.0

Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen zu *open compounds* und nicht-finiten Verbalkomplementen mit *-ing*-Form oder *to*-Infinitiv in englischen Übersetzungen im Vergleich zu anderen englischen RSC-Texten, dass die Normalisierung im Sinne einer eingeschränkten Nutzung von sprachlich innovativen Merkmalen keine vorherrschende, auf die englischen Wissenschaftsübersetzungen zutreffende Übersetzungsnorm im 18. Jhd. war.

### Zusammenfassung und Ausblick

Die in diesem Beitrag präsentierte korpuslinguistische Studie zu englischen Übersetzungen von naturwissenschaftlichen Texten aus Zeitschriften der Londoner Royal Society bestätigt, dass derartige Akademien zur Entstehung der modernen Fachübersetzung als Übersetzungsgattung beigetragen und über die Zeit hinweg eine gewisse Rolle als Übersetzungsagenturen und Akteure der Veröffentlichung und Verbreitung von übersetzten Fachtexten eingenommen haben. Die publizierten Übersetzungen wurden häufig von Mitgliedern oder Sekretären der Royal Society angefertigt. Der Hauptanteil der als Übersetzungen gekennzeichneten Texte im Royal Society Corpus stammt aus dem 18. Jhd., und Französisch war die vorrangige Ausgangssprache. Zu den Hauptthemenfeldern der Texte gehörten u. a. Astronomie, Biologie und Chemie.

Anhand der RSC-Texte ließ sich in der oben vorgestellten Korpusanalyse feststellen, in welchem Maße historische übersetzte und originalsprachliche englische Fachtexte bestimmte innovative sprachliche Merkmale aufweisen, welche sich zur Zeit von Late Modern English in der englischen Sprache etabliert haben. Die Analyse hat gezeigt,

dass es geringfügige Unterschiede zwischen den übersetzten und nicht-übersetzten Texten gibt und dass die übersetzten Texte keine klaren Anzeichen dafür enthalten, dass die Übersetzer aufgrund einer übersetzungsinheränten Normalisierungstendenz stärker auf konventionellere und konservativere linguistische Strukturen zurückgegriffen haben. Die Analyse kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die Übersetzungen und auch die nicht-übersetzten Vergleichstexte im RSC auf ähnliche Weise vom Gebrauch von neuartigen Strukturen innerhalb von Nominalphrasen gekennzeichnet sind und daher ähnlich viele Mehrwortausdrücke enthalten, bei denen ein Nomen durch ein anderes Nomen modifiziert wird und als *open compound* verwendet wird. Außerdem enthalten die Übersetzungen mehr innovative Verbalkomplementstrukturen mit *-ing*-Form und weniger traditionelle *to*-Infinitivergänzungen nach Verben. Die Analyse von informationstheoretischen Surprisalwerten für die untersuchten Strukturen hat gezeigt, dass diese Strukturen zumeist in den nicht-übersetzten Texten in stärker vorhersagbaren und konventionalisierten Kontexten auftauchen als in den Übersetzungen.

Man kann darüber spekulieren, welchen Einfluss die lexikogrammatistischen Strukturen der jeweiligen Ausgangstexte auf die lexikogrammatistischen Merkmale der publizierten Übersetzungen hatten und ob und inwiefern andere der in der Literatur vorgeschlagenen Übersetzungsuniversalien im Übersetzungsprozess eine Rolle gespielt haben. Krüger (2015) beispielsweise hat festgestellt, dass Implizierung, aber vor allem auch Explizierung typische Merkmale moderner wissenschaftlicher Übersetzungen sind und als wichtige Indikatoren der Text-Kontext-Interaktion dienen. Allerdings stehen die für unsere Zwecke relevanten Ausgangstexte bisher in keinem ähnlichen Format wie die im RSC identifizierten Übersetzungen zur Verfügung, sodass kein direkter Vergleich zwischen ihnen möglich ist. Damit kann man diese Texte bisher noch nicht auf sogenannte S-Universalien, zu denen man u. a. Implizierung und Explizierung zählen kann (s. CHESTERMAN 2004: 40, S = Source), oder auf Interferenzen mit ausgangssprachlichen Strukturen überprüfen. Wie bereits oben erwähnt, sollte es jedoch möglich sein, über den Katalog der Royal Society digital verfügbare Scans zahlreicher handschriftlicher ausgangssprachlicher Manuskripte aufzufinden. Als ein Beispiel für einen solchen Ausgangstext aus dem 18. Jhd. lassen sich Schroeters Beobachtungen von Mond und Venus in Form eines 74-seitigen deutschen Manuskripts anführen, welches in den letzten Jahren als Scan durch die Royal Society online verfügbar gemacht wurde (SCHROETER 1792 a). Zu diesem Archivtext gehört eine 63-seitige handschriftliche englische Übersetzung, welche ebenfalls als Scan online verfügbar ist (ibid.). Die Übersetzung von Schroeters Text, welche auch Teil des RSC ist, wurde in den *Philosophical Transactions* publiziert (SCHROETER 1792 b). Ein Beispiel für einen online verfügbaren Ausgangstext aus dem 19. Jhd. ist de Lacaze-Duthiers' *Histoire naturelle de la pourpre de anciens*, welcher als Übersetzung in den *Proceedings* unter dem Titel *Natural history of the purple of the ancients* (LACAZE-DUTHIERS 1860 a, b) veröffentlicht wurde.

Ein systematischer Vergleich der handschriftlichen Ausgangstexte mit den als Fachartikeln veröffentlichten Übersetzungen ist in ihrer gegenwärtigen Form nicht durchführbar. Die Autorin hat hierzu ein Projekt lanciert, mit dem Ziel, so viele Ausgangstexte wie möglich für die im RSC enthaltenen Übersetzungen aus der Zeit von Late

Modern English im Archivmaterial der Royal Society aufzufinden und zumindest die verfügbaren Scans der französisch- und deutschsprachigen Manuskripte in transkribierte, maschinenlesbare Texte als Grundlage für ein mehrsprachiges Parallelkorpus umzuwandeln. Da in mehreren Fällen neben den handschriftlichen Ausgangstexten auch handschriftliche Übersetzungen verfügbar sind, welche vor der veröffentlichten und gedruckten Übersetzungsversion entstanden sind, können diese gegebenenfalls auch nach einer Umwandlung in ein geeignetes Datenformat in zukünftige Untersuchungen mit einbezogen werden, um den Entstehungsprozess der veröffentlichten Fachübersetzungen besser nachvollziehen zu können. Die Erstellung und Analyse eines solchen diachronen Parallelkorpus mit Ausgangstexten und Übersetzungen stellt einen wichtigen Schritt für zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten dar. In den kommenden Untersuchungen wird es darum gehen, die gesammelten Daten weiter zu analysieren, um tiefere Einblicke in die Entwicklung der wissenschaftlichen Übersetzungspraxis im Umfeld der Royal Society und über eventuelle S-Universalien des Übersetzens und Interferenzen mit den ausgangssprachlichen Strukturen zu gewinnen. Ein zentrales Ziel ist es auch, das Parallelkorpus schließlich öffentlich als CQPweb-Version zugänglich zu machen, sodass die Daten für weiterführende linguistische und übersetzungswissenschaftliche Analysen frei genutzt werden können.

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**Kris Peeters**

## Retranslation as Re-accentuation On the Epistemology and Poetics of Retranslation

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### Abstract

*In this paper, we try to answer the often repeated call for more theory-building on retranslation, by discussing the shortcomings of the still dominant 'retranslation hypothesis', and some of the problematic received ideas associated with it, regarding retranslations' novelty, their difference as compared to first or earlier translations, and the ageing of translations as opposed to originals (Section 1). Bringing together the topical issues of difference and historical time, we then discuss an epistemology of change in retranslation, based on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of reaccentuation, in which text and context come together (Section 2). The final part of this paper (Section 3) proposes three possible avenues toward a poetics of retranslation, which address each of the three misleading ideas examined in Section 1, revisiting these in the light of the epistemology of change discussed in Section 2. From the examples given, of Dutch and French translations of Laclos, Joyce and O'Brien, emerges a poetics of retranslation that we shall describe as a re-dialogising, re-complexifying, palimpsestic re-accentuation, that brings change regarding how works of literature are known in the target context.*

*Keywords: epistemology, poetics, retranslation theory, dialogism*

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Kris Peeters

## Retranslation as Re-accentuation

### On the Epistemology and Poetics of Retranslation

“L’histoire a besoin de méthode.” (BRISSET 2004: 62)

#### Abstract

*In this paper, we try to answer the often repeated call for more theory-building on retranslation, by discussing the shortcomings of the still dominant ‘retranslation hypothesis’, and some of the problematic received ideas associated with it, regarding retranslations’ novelty, their difference as compared to first or earlier translations, and the ageing of translations as opposed to originals (Section 1). Bringing together the topical issues of difference and historical time, we then discuss an epistemology of change in retranslation, based on Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of re-accentuation, in which text and context come together (Section 2). The final part of this paper (Section 3) proposes three possible avenues toward a poetics of retranslation, which address each of the three misleading received ideas examined in Section 1, revisiting these in the light of the epistemology of change discussed in Section 2. From the examples given, of Dutch and French translations of Laclos, Joyce and O’Brien, emerges a poetics of retranslation that we shall describe as a re-dialogising, re-complexifying, palimpsestic re-accentuation, that brings change regarding how works of literature are known in the target context.*

#### 0. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Since the nineties, retranslation studies (hereafter RTS) have privileged a perspective on retranslation (RT) that rests on the way in which the phenomenon was presented in the first thematic issue on the topic, the 1990 *Palimpsestes* volume on “*Retraduire*”. Even today, Berman (1990), although available only in French, remains one of the most quoted references in the field, too often, however, by second-hand and through the lens of Chesterman’s (2000) ‘retranslation hypothesis’ (RTH). Chesterman indeed refers to Berman, yet considerably transforms the latter’s thought, taking stock mostly of Bensimon’s (1990) introduction to the “*Retraduire*” volume (PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023: 4-8). Ever since, the RTH has dominated a substantial part of the field, determining how text analyses were conducted in numerous case studies, although it has been met with sharp criticism (KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2003, 2004; MASSARDIER-KENNEY 2015; CADERA 2017a; PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023: 8-12). Even if today many scholars agree that the RTH has run out of breath, much of the current debate still

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has greatly benefited from the comments provided by the editors and the anonymous reviewers; I wholeheartedly thank them for their much appreciated time and effort.

ruminates over that same hypothesis, for which, to our knowledge, no alternative text-analytical epistemology has been put forward. In this theoretical paper, we will first discuss the shortcomings of that dominant paradigm, especially considering three problematic received ideas associated with it (Section 1). Second, we will present an alternative way of conceptualising change in RT, namely Bakhtin's (1981c) theory of dialogical re-accentuation (Section 2). On the basis of that epistemological framework, we will then put forward three possible avenues toward a poetics of RT that are related to the previously mentioned *trivium* of received ideas (Section 3). As such, this paper draws on, and brings together our previous and ongoing research into the poetics of RT.

### **1. The problematic *trivium* of RT: novelty, closeness, ageing**

In the following paragraphs, three received ideas concerning RT shall first be discussed. These ideas are: that RTs are *new* translations of a *same* text in the *same* target language and context (Section 1.1); that RTs are *closer* to the source text (ST) than first translations (Section 1.2); and that RTs are made when existing translations' language has *aged* (Section 1.3). Although this problematic "trivium" (LADMIRAL 2011: 45) does hold some truth, it has been accompanied by misunderstandings that have had a structuring impact on much of the debate over the past decades.

#### **1.1 Novelty, homogenisation and dichotomy**

Since the beginning, RT as a topic of scientific investigation has suffered from ill-considered conceptualisations. These are first of all related to the common definition of RTs as *new* translations of a same ST previously translated in the same target language and context (GAMBIER 1994; TAHIR GÜRÇAĞLAR 2009; KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2010). By that definition, the focus lies with the idea that RTs are "new translations". However, what that means is not unambiguous. On the one hand, "new" can refer to a *translation product* that is new compared to an existing one, and therefore different – this has given rise to the dominant paradigm of differentiability, by which scholars study what is different in RTs as compared to first or earlier translations (rather than what is not different). On the other hand, however, "new" can also refer to a new stage in the *historical process* of subsequent translations, that is, a new publication and therefore a new event in the foreign reception process of a work of literature – this has led to another emphasis, namely on target context / culture (TC) change, rather than textual difference, or change.

Arguably, in RTS, this ambivalent concept of novelty has developed into two perspectives on the relationship between text and context. On the one hand, researchers have privileged text-comparative approaches, looking into *how* specific RTs are different as compared to first or earlier translations (either confirming or denying the RTH, or considering it insufficient). In such analyses, one generally turns to context only in second instance, as an external, explanatory factor, so that textual analysis and contextualisation tend to remain a dual approach, all the more so because the latter

mostly involves looking into the *who?*, rather than the *how?* question. On the other hand, researchers have embraced “primarily [...] contextual” (Cadera 2017a: 14) methods, such as the systemic approach (CADERA 2017a; BERK ALBACHTEN & TAHIR GÜRÇAĞLAR 2019) focusing on the complex interrelations, in a given TC, between historical, socio-cultural, institutional, commercial and agential aspects, addressing the questions *when* texts get retranslated, *who* retranslates them and *what* gets retranslated and *why* (see also the important archival work done by KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2019; GULYÁS 2023; SVAHN 2023), thus refusing to explain the phenomenon’s “mercurial inconstancy” (DEANE-COX 2014: 1) merely by textual factors.

Both these perspectives, albeit different (putting either text or context first), rest on a same and largely accepted premise, namely that contextual changes have an ‘inward’, explanatory effect on textual changes. Less attention has been devoted to RTs’ ‘outward’ effect in the TC, that is, the idea that a RT “must somehow represent a change” (CADERA & WALSH 2022: 4). A RT is *another* translation, at *another* stage in the TC historical process, by which *another*, often competing, interpretation (VENUTI 2004: 36-37) changes how a work of literature is known in the receiving culture. Historical change thus works both ways, from context to text (inward) but also from text to context (outward). To conceptualise how change occurs in that reciprocal relationship between texts and contexts, implies an epistemology of change (a theory of how knowledge of a work of literature changes when it is retranslated) that transcends the dominant hermeneutical (explanatory) approach to context, as well as the current emphasis on either textual difference by which contextual change comes second, or contextual change by which texts come second.

The development of such a historical approach to how the knowledge of works of literature changes in the TC when they are retranslated – not only because RTs are new translations, but because the *mutual relationship* (outside-in and inside-out) between both source and target texts and contexts, evolves – may have been hindered by a second conceptual issue. That issue is the ahistorical and homogenising perspective on languages and contexts enclosed in the definition of RTs as new translations of the *same* text, in the *same* target language and context. Since the cultural turn, TS and RTS scholars are very much aware that cultures and languages change, and that texts do not have a stable and immanent meaning. But the definition we use says otherwise. Yet, when Jacques Aubert and his team of French translators, for instance, retranslated *Ulysses* in the early 2000s, were they really translating the *same* text (with the *same* meaning) in the *same* language and in the *same* TC as Auguste Morel in the late 1920s? RTs should be defined, not as a new version of the same text in the same language, but as an event in the foreign reception process of a work by which a changed translation offers a changed text of that work, in a changed language, in a changed TC. Historical change works both ways: as much as RTs are influenced by cultural and linguistic change in the TC, they also create cultural and linguistic change in that TC.

Third, by the same definition, RT is forced into a dichotomic straitjacket that contrasts source and target, ST and TC. Although commonplace in TS, that dichotomy is

dysfunctional when it comes to RT, as the ST is already present in the TC, to readers and retranslators alike, in an existing translation. That translation can be read, criticised, even re-used by a retranslator, thus becoming a second (and second-degree) source material to the retranslator. When *Ulysses*, for instance, was retranslated in French, Joyce's novel already was a canonical text, in the TC as well, in Morel's 1929 translation (which was included, in 1995, in Gallimard's "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", the unquestioned centre of French canonicity). Morel was indeed re-used by the retranslators. Some retranslators even use existing translations in other languages than the target language. The Dutch retranslators of *Ulysses* (BINDERVOET & HENKES 2012), for instance, have used the existing Dutch, yet also French and German translations<sup>2</sup>, while the Dutch retranslator of Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses* looked at the existing Dutch, but also English and German translations.<sup>3</sup> A case can definitely be made for a more multilingual concept of RT, as advocated by Alevato (2019). At any rate, RT blurs the dichotomy of source and target: the ST already is (a) target text(s), out there to be read by the same potential readership, and target texts can even become second-degree source materials.

Another dichotomy is the one that contrasts RTs with translations, although RTs are, in the very first place, translations. But RTs are seen as 'special' translations, as the exception to an unwritten, yet actually uncertain, general rule, that texts would 'normally' be translated only once. At least for canonical texts, if there is a general rule, surely that rule must be that sooner or later canonised texts are either retranslated, or forgotten (KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2019: 31). That may well be the only 'universal of RT' to stand the test of the phenomenon's complexity. Maybe it is not RT, but single translation of canonical texts that is the exception – albeit often accompanied by reprints and overt or covert revisions (BOLLAERT 2019; SVAHN 2023). More archival work is definitely needed.

Arguably, these homogenisations and dichotomies essentially touch upon the two central topics when it comes to understanding how retranslators translate and how RTs bring creative change, in changed TCs. These central topics are textual difference on the one hand, and contextual evolution on the other hand, as two sides of the same coin of historical change. Both of these topics as well, have been subject to problematic received ideas, as we shall explain in the following paragraphs.

### **1.2 Textual difference and 'closeness'**

When it comes to RT's textual difference in comparison with first or earlier translations, too much credit has been given to the idea that RTs tend to be 'closer' to the ST than existing translations (Chesterman, 2000). If anything, the vast archive of case studies that

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<sup>2</sup> As the translators have stated in interviews in the press and online, e.g. <https://thedreamlifeofbalsosnell.org/2012/08/10/klamaai-nog-aan-toe-ulixes-de-nieuwe/>.

<sup>3</sup> Personal conversation with the retranslator, Martin de Haan.

have endeavoured either to confirm or to refute the RTH,<sup>4</sup> has led to a largely shared agreement on two points: (1) that ‘closeness’ to the ST is not a precise concept, but a *topos* borrowed from publishers’ and translators’ paratexts that can mean just about anything; and (2) that the idea of target-oriented first translations *versus* source-oriented RTs is yet another problematic dichotomy. It should at least, according to Ladmiral, be considered alongside two other components of a complex and “problematic trivium” (2011: 45)<sup>5</sup> in need of much more analysis, namely the parts played by commercial motivations and the multifaceted phenomenon of canonicity.

In addition, Chesterman’s formula is akin to the previously mentioned ahistorical perspective on RT. Its focus on textual ‘closeness’ parentheses contextual evolution, which is dismissed by a fairly laconic “same ST, same TL” (CHESTERMAN 2000: 23). On the other hand, the historical contingency of texts is dichotomised into a differential “earlier” *versus* “later translations” (ibid.), that does not do justice to the phenomenon’s “real complexity” (CADERA 2017a: 6). RTs are not always “later translations”, nor are they always the result of an earlier translation being outdated. Joyce’s *Dubliners*, for instance, was translated fourteen times in Italian, and is available in the market today in at least six different Italian translations. These are all RTs, all co-exist, and were all made between 1988 and 2008, thus surely not because the previous ones had aged. And this is no exception: other examples of such overabundance are Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* in English or Korean (DEANE-COX 2014; LADMIRAL 2011: 30), Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung* in Spanish (CADERA 2017b) or Saint-Exupéry’s *Petit prince* in Turkish (TAHIR GÜRÇAĞLAR 2022). Approaching RT in dichotomic terms of first (or earlier) translations *versus* RTs, or in their diachronic succession without considering their synchronic presence in the TC and the historical specificity of that TC (BRISSET 2004: 63), does not stand to reason.

As we have argued before (PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023), there is a third reason why the RTH is ill-suited to describe historical change. That reason is that the very notion of ‘closeness’ is an epistemological construct which is itself historically contingent (thus culturally diverse). What TCs, and therefore translators and scholars in those societies, believe ‘closeness’ in translation to be, changes over time. Therefore, when ‘closeness’ (whatever it means) is applied to historical change (i.e. to study later translations as compared to earlier ones), one should duly consider the historical evolution of the notion of ‘closeness’ itself. If not, a contemporary envisionment of that notion is projected unto translations of the past (SIMÉONI 2000: 8; BRISSET 2004: 40), in which case it is no wonder that more recent RTs are found to be ‘closer’ to the ST. In fact, they are closer to our own cultural construct of what ‘closeness’ to the ST is, or should be. ‘Closeness’ is hardly an objective measure; it is more of a *petitio principii*.

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<sup>4</sup> Overviews can be found in MILTON & TORRES 2003, DESMIDT 2009, PALOPOSKI & KOSKINEN 2010, MONTI & SCHNYDER 2011, DEANE-COX 2014, ALVSTAD & ASSIS ROSA 2015, and PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, translations from French are ours.

None of these criticisms, however, should be taken as an attack on Andrew Chesterman as such. What Chesterman wrote on RT was never intended to be anything else than a set of examples of four types of hypotheses, put forward as the prolegomena to an “*empirical* research programme for translation studies” (2000: 25, our emphasis). Rather, the issue is that the RTH has been used by RT scholars, not for the empirical research it was meant to illustrate, but (a) as an *epistemological* paradigm that has to a large extent determined how we have studied RTs; (b) as a *hermeneutic* paradigm used to interpret difference in terms of ‘closeness’; and (c) as descriptive, or even predictive *statements* (rather than probabilistic hypotheses) on what RTs are, or ought to be. The RTH, or rather what we have collectively made of it, should be dismissed, instead of being continually discussed.

### **1.3 Contextual difference and ageing**

A third problematic received idea, which is related to the previously mentioned ones, is the purported ageing of translations (as opposed to originals), as a motive for RT. That idea is often attributed to Berman (1990), which is hardly fair. Berman clearly distances himself from those who “search for the reasons behind the need for RTs in a phenomenon that is itself rather mysterious” (1990: 1), namely the conviction that translations ‘age’ (Berman’s inverted comma’s) while originals do not, to then pursue “a very different line of thought” (1). That line of thought is a dense “reflection” on the relationship between translation and historical time, in which Berman distinguishes between two types of temporality. The first is translation’s own temporality (i.e. time inscribed in a translation, so the *textual* dimension of translations’ historicity): in Berman’s view, all translations are marked by incompleteness (“*inachèvement*”; no translation is a perfect rendering) and decay (“*caducité*”; all translations are doomed to die, that is, to be replaced or to be forgotten), so that “the possibility and necessity of retranslation are inscribed in the very structure of the act of translating” (1). Put otherwise, all translations (including RTs) are by nature open to RT. On the other hand, there is historical time (i.e. the *contextual* dimension of translation’s historicity), which chronological linearity unfolds itself, according to Berman who takes inspiration from Goethe, in triadic cycles, of initial “failing” or “shortcoming” (“*défaillance*”), followed by improvement that reduces that “*défaillance*”, and finally “fulfilment” (“*accomplissement*”). When it comes to the history of consecutive translations, translation’s own temporality (*caducité* and *inachèvement*) is integrated into historical time (from *défaillance*, over reduced *défaillance*, to *accomplissement*). This results in repeated triadic cycles of first translations which are “*défaillantes*” (yet Berman admits exceptions, explicitly stating that first translations can exceptionally be “major translations”, “*grandes traductions*”); then RTs that reduce “shortcomings”; and finally “major translations”, i.e. RTs that are “fulfilled” because they bring, not ‘closeness’ or source-orientedness, but a *synthesis*, at a given moment in a TC’s history, of source-orientedness (which in Berman’s view is the *first* stage!) and target-orientedness (*second* stage) that achieves canonical status in the TC, and therefore “*temporarily* suspends the succession of translations” (1990: 5; our emphasis). That

moment in history when major translations occur, is not a full stop (i.e. even major translations ‘age’ after some time, albeit more slowly), nor is it a given: major translations only occur when “the appropriate moment” is there, the ungraspable “Kairos” (the god of opportunity), which in Greek mythology counters the ineluctable destruction (*caducité*) brought by Chronos. Berman’s philosophical “*réflexion*” (his word) is much more, and far less dichotomic, than what it has been taken for (e.g. first translations are always deficient; RTs are source-oriented; major translations do not age; history is a linear process of improvement; all of that has been written, and repeated; none of it conforms to Berman’s *réflexion*).

The ageing of works of literature, whether translations or originals, is “mysterious” (BERMAN 1990: 1) because it is not just an empirical given. It is related to the very complex issue of canonicity. When a translation ‘ages’, “[i]t is not so much the translation itself that is ageing”, Ladmiral (2011: 31) writes, “as our relationship with it”. That relationship (which itself is context- and time-specific) is determined by two factors, one obvious, the other perhaps less so. The obvious element of ageing is that the language used in a translation ages, as compared to contemporary target language which continuously evolves. Morel’s French today is outdated, and some day Aubert’s will be as well. The other factor at play, albeit less obvious, is equally important. That is the “cultural representation” (MASSARDIER-KENNEY 2015: 76) of literary ageing, which is akin to what we (in a given TC) believe originals and translations to be, or ought to be. Besides language itself, that construct also changes over time, and therefore ages (TOPIA 1990: 45-47; BRISSET 2004: 52-56). The difference between translations and originals lies not so much in the (empirical) ageing of their language (Joyce’s English, or Flaubert’s French are outdated as well), but in the social construct of how we believe translations (or their target language) age(s) (bluntly put: badly), and how canonical originals (their source language) and, if we follow Berman, major translations which are “like originals”, age (that is: well, or at least more slowly – which is why claiming Joyce’s or Flaubert’s language is outdated, may come across as provocative, yet not so for Rabelais’ or Chaucer’s which are much older). Canonical texts (and maybe canonical translations as well) are perhaps less influenced by historical contingency because canonical status turns them into national monuments of the past, endowed with atemporal aesthetic value or cultural capital (BOURDIEU 1993: 60 and 187; BRISSET 2004: 53-55). Put otherwise, maybe their relevance to later generations does not ‘age’ as much, or as rapidly as their language does, thus slowing down the *perceived* ageing process. Translations (unless canonised in the TC) stem by definition from foreign literatures, thus are perhaps less easily inscribed in such a national logic of canonisation (with the historical exception of young nations creating their own literary tradition by translations of imported world literature). Therefore, hypothetically, when their language ages, our relationship with them ages without the stabilising forces of canonisation slowing down the destructive forces of Chronos.

Nonetheless, the outdatedness of a translation can indeed be the result of empirical ageing, in which case it is no longer read or deemed readable because of important linguistic, translational or socio-ideological changes in the TC. Yet, an outdated translation is not necessarily an old one (nor does an old translation have to be outdated).

Our relationship with a translation can also change for other reasons, including *authors* being forgotten or censored in the TC. One of those reasons can also be that an existing translation *is presented* as no longer readable, because there is a new translation. One of the changes that RTs bring to evolving TCs, is that they *make* (a) previous translation(s) (seem) outdated, because the “new translation” must surely have been made for good reason. The most obvious reason, given the cultural representation that translations age badly, then is that the existing translations must be outdated, although empirical ageing may not be involved. Translations are not necessarily replaced because they have aged; it can also be the other way around: they are replaced (for other reasons) and therefore presented as having aged. The change that RTs bring in the TC, is first and foremost a changed relationship with the existing translation(s), because change and therefore the latter’s (purported) outdatedness are now thematised in the TC.

In the paragraphs above, we have discussed a number of methodological pitfalls (homogenisation, dichotomy, ahistoricity) and a misleading *trivium* of received ideas (concerning novelty, closeness, and ageing), that may have hampered the development of an epistemology of change in RT. That need for a new epistemology that can replace the now shunned RTH by considering historical change, not as a predominantly text-related, nor as a predominantly context-related matter, but in the mutual interrelatedness of texts and contexts, both outside-in and inside-out, brings us to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of re-accentuation.

## **2. Re-accentuation: the never-ending process of reinterpreting the classics**

Arguably, Bakhtin’s (1981c) theory of dialogical re-accentuation can indeed offer such an epistemology, avoiding the pitfalls of the RTH and underpinning a more critical view on the concepts discussed above. Bakhtin approaches historical change in terms of context-determined yet textually present dialogical relationships between texts and their contexts. Whereas the systemic approach has shifted attention toward contextual complexity, away from the text by its rightful avoidance of the RTH, the dialogical approach presented here advocates a return to textual analysis (yet not in the way the RTH does), while considering texts in their historical relationship with both source and target contexts (as does the systemic approach, though emphasizing inward change). That relationship is dialogical; it is expressed through language, as the two-way conduit (both inward and outward) between contexts and texts. It is by their use of language that texts, whether originals or translations, absorb their historical contexts in all their complexity; it is also by their use of language that texts, including RTs, react to existing texts, including STs and existing translations, and engage a dialogue between their own historical context and other historical contexts voiced by those existing texts. When RTs occur, that dialogue changes, thus brings change in the TC with regard to how a work of literature is known.

### **2.1 Heteroglossia and historical change**

Re-accentuation is a way of conceptualising the historical process of continuous re-interpretation of the classics (PEETERS 2021; PEETERS & SANZ GALLEGO & PAULIS 2022), by bringing together an epistemology of language (dialogism) – which is not a theory of translation as such, yet relevant to translation since language is the raw material translations are made of – and a concept of changing, mutual (outside-in and inside-out) interaction between texts and historical contexts.

Bakhtin's theory is contained in a long essay titled 'Discourse in the novel' (1981c: 259-422). As evidenced by that title, his main concern is the novel's relationship to the languages and discourses (i.e. languages used in individual and social voices) present in a given socio-ideological, historical context. Novelistic discourse, Bakhtin argues, incorporates materials borrowed from those voices present in the context in which it is written (including socio-ideological perspectives and viewpoints included in them, and their chronotopes, i.e. collective representations of time-space; BAKHTIN 1981b and BRISSET 2004: 41, 47-48). The novel thus reacts to the diversity of languages (i.e. heteroglossia – diversity in a language by influence from other languages) and discourses (i.e. heterology – social diversity within a language) that comes with its contextual situatedness. Its linguistic material is "borrowed from others" (ROBINSON 2011), as it reacts to individual, social, ideological, regional, historical voices, including the socio-ideological perspectives on reality that they bring, present in a given socio-ideological, historical context. Discourse in the novel is therefore dialogical: it is shaped by the 'responsiveness' by which an individual stylistic expression enters in dialogue with the plethora of interconnected voices that cohabit within social space, and from which meaning emerges. This is why the novel is rooted in heteroglossia (1981c: 293-295)<sup>6</sup>.

Although novelistic discourse is embedded in the highly complex diversity of social discourses present in its context (which are its linguistic material), the language used in a novel (the form it uses) does not necessarily manifest heteroglossia. The discursive field of the novel is permeated by the dynamic between what Bakhtin refers to as two "stylistic lines". The First Stylistic Line in the history of the novel tends toward uniformity. In that tradition, akin to epic (1981a), materials used are detached from their own, various discourses and voices, as heteroglossia is organised according to a hierarchical principle. That principle subdues the "centrifugal forces" of discourse diversity to the "centripetal forces" of authoritative linguistic correctness (1981c: 272). This results in monological, "single-voiced" discourse, in which characters and narrators share the same, conventional, highbrow language-of-literature, closed on itself as other types of social discourses reputed unworthy of literature, are excluded from the novel. That language of "general literariness" (383), detached from its socio-linguistic context, exists only in literature, and in discourses aligned with the authority of highbrow literary style and correctness (in politics, journalism, philosophy,

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<sup>6</sup> From this point forward, for practical reasons, we use "heteroglossia" as an umbrella term that includes heterology.

education). The Second Stylistic Line in the novel, on the other hand, relativises such abstract language by importing real-life language use, thus the concreteness of heteroglossia. While centripetal forces seek stability, the centrifugal forces at work in the Second Stylistic Line challenge pre-conceived, conventional discourses – Bakhtin thus associates it with modernity (HIRSCHKOP 2021) – by embracing the social and ideological diversity of heteroglossia. Narrators and characters then develop their own voices by embodying socio-ideologically specific ways of expression (e.g. the language of a working man, a would-be writer, a young girl abandoned by her lover, an elderly priest, or bourgeois, catholic, communist, or roaring twenties ways of expression, and so on, that all interconnect). Novelistic discourse is thus turned into a multifarious means of characterisation, by multiple voices that show “the present in all its open-endedness” (1981a: 19). Such discourse is “multi-voiced”, as it brings all discourses and genres present in the context, into novelistic discourse. This is the reason why Bakhtin’s concept of “novelness” is more a force than a genre. It applies to all forms and types of style that challenge highbrow tradition by celebrating heteroglossia, including in other genres (poetry, theatre, film and tv-series dialogue) that can be “novelised” as well. Novelness and multivoicedness are the stylistic and narrative counterparts of contextual heteroglossia, when the sociolinguistic diversity associated with literary material (e.g., the previously mentioned working man, would-be writer, and so on), also affects literary form (making use of their respective, diverse and multiple voices).

Heteroglossia and therefore historical context, are at the heart of Bakhtin’s concept of dialogical re-accentuation. As explained above, novels are rooted in the heteroglossia of their time, thus bring their historical context into the text by the socio-ideological voices they incorporate. On the other hand, that text also becomes part of another historical context, i.e. the one in which it is read. This is why readers too respond to heteroglossia, present both in the text they read, and in their own historical and social-ideological context, including the place they see for heteroglossia in literature. Those contexts, including societal heteroglossia in them, are subject to historical change. Therefore, Bakhtin is also concerned with the changing contextual background against which novelistic discourses are understood. Re-accentuation involves that changing dialogical background, hence the continuous reinterpretation and re-use of classic works of literature, in changing contexts. Simply put: the material text of a work of literature does not change (*Ulysses* will always be *Ulysses*, abstraction made of slight varieties in different editions), but reception contexts do (*Ulysses* is no longer received, read nor interpreted as it was in 1922). Therefore, responsiveness, i.e. the interpretation of, and engagement with that text, including its relationship with contextual heteroglossia, changes, so that “the historical life of classic works is in fact the uninterrupted process of their social and ideological re-accentuation” (1981c: 421), through re-interpretations and re-uses (in comments, parodies, adaptations, imitations, screen adaptations, and so on), in changed contexts. Re-accentuation, as a way of conceptualising the process by which the classics meet an uninterrupted chain of dialogical responses, is first and foremost an epistemological dialogue of historical

contexts “in which (...) one historical specificity speaks to another” (DENTITH 1995: 96), to make meaning out of texts.

## **2.2 Translation as re-accentuation**

Although Bakhtin’s theory of re-accentuation is not a theory of translation, translation is indeed a re-accentuation, and one that plays an important part in the afterlife of classics of world literature. Translators as well are readers that engage, from their own historical context, in a responsive dialogue with a text’s historical specificity, thus develop their own socio-ideologically and historically specific, individual attitudes toward the heteroglossia present in the ST material on the one hand, and in their own TC on the other hand. In that sense, Aubert and his team were not reading, nor retranslating the ‘same’ text in the ‘same’ language as Morel. One of the major disputes between Joyce translators was precisely about heteroglossia: Paul Claes contended that *Ulysses* contains “mainly idiomatic English”, thus should be translated in mainly idiomatic Dutch, while Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes claimed the opposite, emphasising Joyce’s playful deconstruction of the language, hence the need for a bold, heteroglossic translation in “Joycean Dutch” (PEETERS 2013).

As this example shows, translators, of course, are not only readers that interpret the ST material in a given way. They are also writers, creators of a target text, in the target language and context of their own contemporaneity, therefore developing an attitude toward contemporary context and target language heteroglossia in that context, including the place they see for it in translated literature, as a dialogical response to the heteroglossia present in the ST material. Paul Claes’ and Mon Nys’ (1994) translation is closer to Bakhtin’s First Stylistic Line of the novel, while Bindervoet & Henkes (2012) re-accented the novel’s interpretation in the Dutch TC toward increased heteroglossia, thus moving it closer to the Second Stylistic Line in the TC. That way, they did not only develop a changed attitude toward both source and target heteroglossia (outside-in), they also brought change in the TC (inside-out). This is not a matter of ‘closeness’ to the ST – which was claimed by all the translators involved, albeit with a different concept of what ‘closeness’ to Joyce’s text means. Rather, it is a matter of how a given concept of ‘closeness’ to the ST as expressed in an existing translation, is re-accented when another concept of ‘closeness’ is created in a RT – in this case, one that brings the translated material closer to the Second Stylistic Line of heteroglossia and multivoicedness. Such a re-accentuation can, but need not, happen after a given amount of time. And it can, but need not, happen when retranslators consciously use and improve (in their view) on an existing translation. Even when retranslators choose not to look at existing translations, their RT still creates historical change, by re-accenting the way in which a work of literature is known, and can be read, in the TC.

## **2.3 RT as second-degree re-accentuation**

As was made clear by the open polemic between Dutch Joyce translators, re-accentuation does not always occur as the result of much ageing (18 years, in this case); it can also be induced by concomitant conflicting visions. However, even when the

time lag between two translations is small, RTs still are translations made “after *and against*” (STEINER 1975: 412; our emphasis). As RTs are presented to the public as “new translations”, they have to be somehow ‘better’, that is, more faithful, reliable, readable, modern, closer to the original, or any other *topos* in paratexts and press reviews. Retranslators have to deliver on that assumption and to somehow create change in comparison with the existing translation(s), because otherwise their RT would have no legitimacy. Retranslators thus “assume *some* stance towards the first translator” (KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2015: 28). That stance is typically a polemical one, either overt (i.e. when discussed in paratexts, and when existing translations are consciously used, to improve on them) or hidden (when not talked about, or when existing translations are not looked at).<sup>7</sup> The existence of (an) earlier translation(s) in the TC is a given of RT; therefore, the materials that retranslators dialogically react to, either by using them or by the refusal to use them, include previous translations, as well as the ST material. To come back to re-accentuation and historical change, it would appear that retranslators formulate, from their own historical TC and with their own responsiveness toward heteroglossia in that TC, a dialogical response to the ST material, including its attitude toward heteroglossia stemming from its own historical context. At the same time, retranslators formulate *another* dialogical response, either to the way in which existing translations had responded to that ST material and the attitude toward heteroglossia contained in it (when retranslators use existing translations), or to the fact that a previous translation already exists (but is not used). The re-accentuation that occurs in RT therefore is a re-accentuation to the second degree, and one that is influenced by, yet also brings historical change. The re-accentuation of the ST material that occurs in RT, implies a re-accentuation of existing translations that had already re-accented that source material in the TC. As the latter are existing TC materials, RTs are not simply more source-oriented or closer to the ST; rather, RTs trace a path of increased dialogical interaction between source and target texts and contexts, both outside-in and inside-out. Change in RT is a two-way epistemology, from both source and TCs to texts, and from both source and target texts to TCs.

### 3. Towards a poetics of RT

The theory of re-accentuation and its two-way epistemology of changing-texts-in-changing-contexts, when applied to RT as in Section 2.3 above, can feed into possible approaches to the poetics of RT. Poetics is defined here, following Aristotle, as the analysis of how a work of verbal art uses language (form) to represent objects, characters and events (content), and what effects this has on its interpretation in a given context. Following the theory of re-accentuation, the poetics of RT can be defined as the study of how a work of verbal art (a RT) uses changed target language (form) to re-accent the way

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<sup>7</sup> Bakhtin (1984: 196) defines “hidden polemic” or “hidden dialogue” as a type of dialogical response to someone else’s discourse, by which the other’s voice is not addressed openly, yet in which “One word acutely senses alongside it someone else’s word speaking about the same object”.

in which (an) existing work(s) of verbal art (the existing translation(s)) used target language (form) to re-accent the way in which an existing work of verbal art (an original) used source language (form) to represent objects, characters and events (content), and what effects this has on the interpretation of that work, including how it changes the way in which that work had been translated before, in a given historical TC. Our approach to form in poetics focuses on heteroglossia as the two-way conduit between texts and contextual situatedness, as explained above.

In the following paragraphs, we shall present three possible strands for the analysis of that poetics of RT. Each of these strands builds on the previous one, and addresses one of the elements that compose the misleading *trivium* of RT discussed above (Section 1), revisiting these in the light of the framework of re-accentuation (Section 2). Each of these strands should be seen as hypothetical – in the sense that the model for the study of RT poetics proposed in these pages, could hypothetically be used to describe what happens in other RTs, in other languages, other genres or types of discourse open to heteroglossia and akin to ‘novelness’ (in journalism, film or theatre), and other contexts, than the ones we have studied. None of these ideas, however, should be taken as the prolegomena to yet another probabilistic universal such as the RTH. In re-accentuation, changing context is key; therefore, in a Bakhtinian epistemology, there is no such thing as a universal.

First, we will focus our attention on the alleged ageing of translations (Section 1.3), arguing that ageing is not a translation-inherent phenomenon, but is related to changing target text heteroglossia, as a result of which RTs can be studied as re-dialogising re-accentuations of existing translation(s) (Section 3.1). Next, we will discuss how RTs challenge some of the hypothetical ‘universals’ of translation, such as explicitation, standardisation, conventionalisation, or simplification, and how that idea can lead to a poetics which approaches ‘closeness’, not as a probabilistic universal, nor as a descriptive statement (Section 1.2), but as a context-determined and historically contingent, thus changing combination of variables (Section 3.2). Finally, we will look into the question of RTs novelty (Section 1.1) and discuss a possible way of analysing RT poetics in terms of a re-accentuation that combines revisions and palimpsestic re-uses of, or overlaps with, existing translations (Section 3.3).

### **3.1 Ageing, heteroglossia and re-dialogisation in RT**

Part of the misleading received idea that translations age while originals do not, is true. Translations do age. But so do originals. After a given amount of time, all texts age. Rabelais, Montaigne, Chaucer, Shakespeare can all be read today in modern language adaptations / modernisations / transpositions – curiously, there is a certain reluctance to call them (intralingual) translations. Even Berman’s “major translations” age, as they only “temporarily suspen[d] the succession of translations” (1990: 5), laying claim to the title of *the* canonical translation only until the “taboo represented by the retranslation of canonical translations” (LADMIRAL 2011: 45) is transgressed. Morel’s 1929 longtime canonical translation of *Ulysses* (overviewed by Valery Larbaud, sanctioned by Joyce himself) *has* been replaced by a RT, albeit only after 75 years, and

so have the more iconic examples of major translations given by Berman (Baudelaire's Poe, or Chateaubriand's *Paradise lost*) (PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023: 9-10). Canonical texts (whether originals, or major translations) age too, and can even be forgotten (who today remembers Carl Spitteler or Sinclair Lewis, both Nobel Prize winners?). That happens when there is no, or no longer, re-accentuation, that constantly updates canonical texts' relevance to contemporary contexts, by including them in new texts and artefacts (novels, comic books, newspaper articles, critical comments, films, songs, works of art, adaptations, and also translations), thus establishing a changing dialogue with today's concerns.

Although translations age, their ageing does not necessarily play a role in the appearance of a RT. New translations (RTs) turn up when that dialogue, as it occurs in the re-accentuation performed in (an) existing translation(s), is perceived as dysfunctional in the TC, for any number of reasons. This can, but need not, be due to its language being experienced as outdated. It is also possible that its language *use* (its heteroglossia, or lack thereof) or its content are considered problematic, for ideological (see the case of Agatha Christie's *And then there were none*, CADERA & WALSH 2022: 4), or aesthetic reasons. Often, however, behind all of these possible *motives* for RT, there is a more fundamental *motivation*: commercial and/or symbolic capital. Generally, if there is no money or prestige to be gained, by the publisher and/or the translator, there is no RT. It is commercial motivation that brings publishers to set off the previous translation's outdatedness against the new translation's alleged freshness, closeness, faithfulness, and so on (PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023: 7-8). More than a reason for RT, the ageing of existing translations is a motive used as a commercial argument, while the real motivation is profitability and symbolic value (GULYÁS 2022: 216 and 220-221). The publishing rate of, for instance, Italian Joyce translations (10 translations of *Dubliners* between 1974 and 1995, 5 of *Ulysses* since 2012) can only be explained by commercial rivalry between publishers, competing for a national market with multiple centres of production (Milan, Florence, Rome) and the symbolic and commercial capital that comes with having their own Joyce translations. In multi-centred literary systems such as the Italian or the Spanish ones, ageing may well play a less important role when it comes to what is retranslated and when, than in strongly centralised literary systems such as the French or the Dutch ones. It would be interesting to put that hypothesis to the test, in a large, transversal, cross-cultural project on RT.

Whatever the motive may be for RT to occur, whether ageing or not, the re-accentuation performed in RT concerns language-in-contexts, i.e. the way in which target language is used, in a given (historical, socio-ideological) TC, to create a particular idea of 'closeness', or nexus of Toury's (2012) adequacy (how a translation achieves a given 'faithfulness' to the ST material) and acceptability (its appropriateness, including the language it uses, in the TC). RTs redefine that very nexus of 'closeness' by a polemical response (either overt or hidden) to how the ST was translated by making use of TC language. In that second-degree re-accentuation, language use and heteroglossia are key: the poetics of RT rests on how changing target (con)text

language is used to portray source (con)text language, what effects that yields on the interpretation of content and meaning, and how those effects bring change (or not) in the TC, in comparison with existing translations (whether re-used or not).

Language use (including heteroglossia or the lack thereof) may even be one of the keys as to why some translations (including RTs) age badly (rapidly), and others age well (slowly). The idea that translations age thus are replaced by RTs because their language ages might not be entirely true; it could also be the case that it is language *use* that makes *some* translations age faster, while others age slower. Language, Meschonnic (1990) argued, is the palimpsest of translation: that “sub-text” determines a translation’s “post-text” (Meschonnic’s terms), or longevity in the TC. According to Meschonnic, when a translator uses a language they believe to be “possible” (arguably, one could say conventional in the TC), the “historicism” (historical contingency) of that language is what makes our relationship with a translation age. When, however, translators use language in such a way that they create “a poetics of their own”, their translations are “like originals”, and age well, in their own “historicity” (as opposed to “historicism”). Meschonnic’s theory lays a bridge between Berman’s idea of major translations, and Bakhtin’s distinction of two Stylistic Lines in novelistic discourse. Translations that use conventional target language, draw their language from the First Stylistic Line of “general literariness” in the TC, thus could age more rapidly, as those literary conventions are subject to historical change. Translations closer to the Second Stylistic Line, however, embrace target language heteroglossia and, through “novelness”, create a specific combination of absorbed languages and discourses ‘fitting’ their content materials, and therefore a poetics, a voice of their own which is not conventional (since it is a voice of their own) – they can (but not always do) become major translations. Of course, the question what the effects of heteroglossia on canonisation are, and whether heteroglossia may slow down translations’ ageing process needs much more analysis, but it does seem to be the case that many of the works that make up the canon of Western literature, and certainly of modernity, and are at the heart of retranslation studies (Rabelais, Cervantes, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Shakespeare, Kafka, Joyce, ...), are indeed heteroglossic.

In previous research, we found that early translators (of the forties to the sixties, in some cases up to the nineties) of Joyce’s *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*, across a number of target languages (Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish), tended to explicate the meaning of the ST material, and conventionalise language use by means of standardisations. Early translators thus resorted to the conventional, idiomatic language of the First Stylistic Line, reducing heteroglossia and monologising the ST material, in the target language form. Standardisation of form (language) and explication of meaning (content) also tended to co-occur – when language was standardised, the meaning conveyed in that language was also explicated. Twenty-first-century retranslators, on the contrary, replaced segments of the previous translations that involved explicitations and standardisations, with retentions of implicitness and ambiguity, and TC heteroglossia. Interestingly, they re-used many segments of the previous translations, yet almost exclusively segments that did not explicate or standardise. This

indicates that heteroglossia is indeed key to RT's re-accentuation of existing translations. The re-introduction of TC heteroglossia in the RTs, resulted in multivoicedness being re-introduced. Similar phenomena occur in the Dutch RT of Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (PEETERS 2021), English RTs of Camus' *L'Étranger* (KAPLANSKY 2004) and Zola's *Nana* (BROWNLIE 2006), or in André Markowicz' French RT of Dostoevsky's *Brat'ja Karamazovy* (GACOIN LABLANCHY & BASTIEN-THIRY 2014). In 1993, that RT was met with sharp criticism, for its non-respect of "la norme du bien écrire" – i.e. for the target language heterology it introduced when rendering Dostoevsky's heterologic Russian. Markowicz' RT was averse to the conventional "general literariness" of the First Stylistic Line, that critics associated with the *Frères Karamazov* they had read, because, in the early fifties, Dostoevsky had been translated along those lines, as a "great author", and TC conventions of the time dictated that great authors use correct, standard language. The controversy brought by Markowicz' RT changed that idea, and re-accented how Dostoevsky was known in the TC, by re-introducing heteroglossia and multivoicedness. It re-dialogised Dostoevsky in the French TC.

This is why we put forward what we called the re-dialogisation hypothesis (PEETERS & SANZ GALLEGU 2022). That hypothesis, presented here as a possible strand for the analysis of RT poetics, of other texts, in other translations and other languages, can be formulated as follows. When existing translations of heteroglossic, multivoiced novels explicitate meaning and standardise language according to the First Stylistic Line, thus becoming monological (single-voiced) texts, the re-accentuation that occurs in recent RTs de-explicitates and de-standardises how that work was known in the existing translation(s). As a result, the RT re-dialogises the translated work in the TC, by a poetics that moves the translated text closer to the Second Stylistic Line of dialogical (multivoiced) novelistic discourse. The change that RT thus brings in the TC, is double: not only does RT bring a changed interpretation of the translated work in the TC, it also changes the way in which the existing translations are perceived, namely as outdated, less adequate, or no longer acceptable.

The re-dialogising re-accentuation that occurs in RT, is a result of increased dialogism of intertwined source and target voices. Whereas translation typically concerns the way in which the source author's voice (including narrator's and character's voices) is re-accented by the translator's target voice, in RT, there is the previous translator's voice, which can be ignored, or used in the translation process. In the latter case, that previous translator's voice is at the same time a target voice to the author's voice, and a source voice to the retranslator's voice. In addition, other target voices (i.e. other re-accentuations of the ST material) may come into play.

A lovely example of this can be found in the French translations of a formula used by Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses*, which occurs (a biblical) three times, in slightly different formulations: "Agenbite of inwit. Conscience" (U1.481-82 in the Gabler edition), "Agenbite of inwit." (U9.197) and "Agenbite of inwit: remorse of conscience." (U9.809-10). That third occurrence contains the key as to how to interpret Stephen's heteroglossic formula (that Joyce borrowed from a 14<sup>th</sup>-century moral treatise, so as to give a pedantic voice to his character, who is an aestheticist aspiring writer): "Agenbite"

(agen-bite, again-bite), is a direct translation of the Latin *remorsus*, the repeated (*re*) 'bite' (*morsus*) of a feeling of moral guilt ("inwit", in-wit, inner understanding). Heteroglossic (Latin-English), heterologic (mediaeval English in Joyce's English) and multivoiced (Stephen's inner voice in the narrator's voice) in the ST, that formula becomes even more multivoiced in the French context, as existing TC voices are added to that dialogical multivoicedness. Morel (1929) translated Stephen's formula with "*Morsure de l'ensoi*" [bite of the interior self], thus re-creating the idea of a bite, yet not its repetition, while standardising language, therefore losing (etymological) heterology. He further translated "inwit" with a philosophical term conventional in the then existing French translations of Kant's *an-sich*, that is, pure empirical existence (so, outside of conscience, let alone moral conscience, although that is the topic of Stephen's inner voice).

That translation was criticised in the seventies by Jacques Lacan, who indeed found "*de l'ensoi*" unacceptable, while in the meantime yet another, additional strand of philosophical meaning had been added to it, namely Sartre's existentialism, in which *l'être en-soi* refers to existence that remains unconscious to itself, as of objects. Lacan (2005: 164) proposes an alternative translation that re-accentuates Joyce's formula according to the psychoanalyst's own preoccupations: inwit, he writes, "rather means [...] the bite of a witty word, the bite of the unconscious". Lacan thus re-interprets Joyce's "inwit" as the *unconscious*, that reveals itself in the *mot d'esprit*.

Even more interestingly, in 2004, Michel Cusin, who happened to be a specialist of Lacan, came up with the following RT: "*Re-mords de l'inextimé. Remords de conscience*" [Re-morse of the inextimate. Remorse of conscience], which re-introduces the idea of repetition, even emphasised by a hyphen that pastiches Lacan's style, and mirrors the latter's concept of the *extime*, that is, the outer aspect of intimacy (the *intime*) by which Lacan stresses that intimacy cannot exist without the idea of the Other. That RT thus re-accentuates Joyce by bringing in Lacan's voice, while re-accentuating Morel's translation of Joyce, and re-accentuating Lacan's translation of Joyce by coming back to "conscience", as in Morel, instead of the unconscious. The dialogical interplay of source and target voices in RT can get complicated.

In RT, source and target voices and the contexts they voice, are dialogically intertwined. Those voices re-used in RT come with histories of their own. As a result, through re-dialogizing re-accentuation, RT creates a heterologic 'time spread' of sorts, which is larger than in the early translations examined. In that respect, it is perhaps not so much the translations that age, than the way in which translations deal with age. In any case, we have argued in the paragraphs above, that the analysis of the poetics of RT could focus on how RTs perform a re-dialogising re-accentuation, which re-uses yet de-explicitates and de-standardises existing translations, thus creating target text heteroglossia and heterology, that can even be increased by including the dialogical interplay with other TC voices. The poetics of RT is concerned with the analysis of how linguistic materials from both source and target texts and contexts are dialogised in RT by their mutual interplay in the target text form, and how that form re-accentuates the

existing translation, thus bringing a changed interpretation of a work of literature, in a changed TC.

### 3.2 Closeness, S- and T-variables and complexification in RT

As our analyses indicated that RTs tend to bring change in the TC by doing away with standardisations and explicitations present in the “*espace de la traduction*”, a further possible avenue for research into the poetics of RT is the idea that RT may challenge the notion of so-called “universals” of translation. In the literature, explicitation, standardisation and simplification are described as potential T-universals (T for target) (e.g. CHESTERMAN 2011; MALMKJAER 2012, and many others since, see PEETERS 2024, *forthc.*), that is, features typical of translated language as opposed to original target language. Our analyses of re-dialogisation in RTs (Section 3.1) suggest otherwise, namely that standardisations and explicitations occur far more in early translations, yet far less in RTs. This is why we decided, when invited to a conference on simplification in translation and writing,<sup>8</sup> to look into how simplification (standardisation, explicitation) and complexification (their counterparts) could be conceptualised in RT poetics. We decided to consider simplification, not as a probabilistic T-universal, but as the hypernym of a set of *variables*, by which a literary translator, when confronted with complexities in a given segment of the ST material (S-variables; S for source, i.e. *what* is simplified, or not), strikes a specific balance (T-variables; for target, i.e. *how* is it simplified, or not, in the target text) between adequacy and acceptability (TOURY 2012). This way, we wanted to explore whether the changing idea of ‘closeness’ in RT can be conceptualised in a functional and dynamic manner, by approaching ‘closeness’ not as a given, nor as a probabilistic universal, but as a changing balance in poetics, by comparing how different translations relate to S- (what) and T- (how) variables, on a continuum between simplification and complexification, as given S-variables are simplified or not, by resorting or not resorting to given T-variables, thus revealing a given idea of ‘closeness’ (PEETERS 2025, *forthc.*). The question, then, is not an essentialist inquiry into whether RTs are ‘closer’ to the ST or not, but an analysis of how the epistemological construct of what ‘closeness’ is, evolves across translations, thus changes in the TC as RTs modify the balance between what we termed S- and T-variables. The S-variables we looked at are complex *content* (including cultural content such as realia, intertextual references, allusions, ambiguities, implicit meanings); complex *language* (e.g. intricate syntax, rhythms and rhymes, vocabulary, heteroglossia); and complex *narrative features* (e.g. multi-centred narration, focalisation, multivoicedness, free indirect speech), which can also co-occur. Simplification of these features can happen through a number of translation strategies or techniques, which we subsumed, for practical reasons, into three main categories of T-variables: *explicitation* when S-variables are rendered more explicit, precise, detailed, or clearer, e.g. by a hyponym or an example, a clarification

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<sup>8</sup> *T&R7 – Translate, write, simplify*, organised by Fabio Regattin and Sara Vecchiato, university of Udine, 24-25 November 2022.

either intratextual or in a note, an explicative paraphrase, or an explicit name replacing an ambivalent pronoun; *adaptation* when a complex ST segment is replaced with a segment reputed easier to understand for the implied TC reader, or more conventional, e.g. by cultural substitution or domestication, modernisation, or transformation of free indirect speech into direct speech; and *condensation*, that is, simplification by means of summary, reduction, or omission. Conversely, a translator can also resort to counterpart T-variables in the continuum, namely *implicitation* (and not explicitation), *retention* (instead of adaptation), and/or what Berman (1984, 1985) called “*traduction littérale*” or “*traduction de la lettre*” [literal translation], i.e. a translation that highlights form (including heteroglossia and heterology), rather than follow the ideology of transparency and “*déformation*” (1984: 18) which prioritises content over form.

In our analyses, we found, as already stated above, that early Joyce translations tend to simplify complex ST materials by explicitations (making meaning more precise), standardising adaptations (notably of heteroglossia and heterology), or occasionally condensations. 21st-century RTs tend to shift the balance of S- and T-variables away from explicitation and toward implicitness, away from standardising adaptation replaced with retention of foreignising content, heterology and ambiguity of voices, and literal translation with more attention for rhythm, rhyme, and other formal peculiarities. Joyce RTs thus re-accent the construct of ‘closeness’ in the TC by re-complexifying what had been simplified before. Re-complexification can thus be analysed as a mechanism by which the very construct of ‘closeness’ is re-accented in RTs, as combinations of S- and T-variables move across time, from translation to translation, in the ‘*espace de la traduction*’ of a given translation culture.

In the Dutch translations of Laclos’ *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (PEETERS 2021, 2025) for instance, the latest RT, by Martin de Haan, resorts to both modernising and archaising (thus heterologic) target language when addressing the key complexities of Laclos’ novel, namely its linguistic and cultural embeddedness in French 18th-century salon culture, and its polyphony and the stylistic variety that results from it. The standardisations and conventionalisations present in earlier translations of the fifties, sixties and seventies are de-standardised and de-conventionalised through a RT strategy that combines foreignising retention (including heteroglossia) with historicising as well as modernising heterology, thus creating a heterologic ‘time spread’ instrumental to how content and style were rendered.

### **3.3 Novelty, re-use and revision, and the palimpsest of RT**

A final topic that we want to address, is RTs’ inevitable, knowing or unknowing, re-use of existing translations. Unlike what publishers and journalists in their wake lead the public to believe, RTs are not entirely “new translations”. Languages are limited in options when it comes to translating content, language and narration from a given ST into a given target language. As a result, even retranslators who do not look at existing translations sometimes inevitably use the same phrasings. Some retranslators, though, consciously re-use existing translations. As we saw, Joyce retranslators tended to recycle

segments from earlier translations in which there were no explicitations or standardisations. RT, put otherwise, always comes with a part of non-retranslation. That part, whether conscious re-use or unknowing overlap, should be included in the poetics of RT, as it provides valuable insights into what actually changes, and what not, and thus how RTs' re-accentuation creates change in the TC. The question at hand, however, is not so much related to *how* translations change (since we are looking at what does not change), but to *what* and *how much* in them does not change, i.e. is re-used, whether knowingly or not. A second question is how much of that is inevitable overlap.

These questions of degree are related to the "fine line" between revision and RT (PALOPOSKI & KOSKINEN 2010): to what extent is a RT new or different as compared to an existing translation, or should so be to qualify as a RT, rather than a revision. As was shown by Van Poucke (2020), lexical overlap between translations – and even parallel translations made independently of each other – can mount up to about 50 to 60% of a RT (in this case, Dutch RTs of four Russian classics). Yet lexical overlap, however indicative of re-uses, does not necessarily say much about how those lexical items are integrated in language *use*, i.e. heteroglossia and re-dialogisation. This is why we decided to further look into re-uses and overlaps in RT, starting from Meschonnic's (1990) argument that translation is palimpsestic by the language it uses (see Section 3.1). In RT, that palimpsest, i.e. TC language material, can be double: when an existing translation is used, the palimpsest of RT is not only language use by the retranslator, but also the way in which this language use is a (overt or hidden) dialogical (polemical) response to, and re-accentuation of, the target language used by the previous translator(s).

The French translations of Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* provide a very interesting case for such an analysis of the palimpsestic poetics of RT, in terms of re-uses and overlaps *versus* revisions of the existing translation (PEETERS *forthc.*). O'Brien's novel was translated by Henri Morisset in 1964, and retranslated by Patrick Hersant in 2012. In 2015, Ludivine Bouton-Kelly made an additional, partial RT, of the first half of the novel, as part of an unpublished PhD. Interestingly, Hersant's RT was accused of plagiarising Morisset's translation, with only some minor, insignificant revisions here and there (i.e. seriously comprising its status of being a "new translation", as stated in the blurb and on the publisher's website), while Bouton-Kelly's RT was made without looking at the existing translations (thus providing us with the opportunity to look into unconscious overlaps with existing translations).

As our topic of investigation included the question of how much overlaps or re-uses and how much revisions there are in the RTs, we decided to make use of MSWord's Compare function (included under the Review tab), which tracks and counts overlaps and revisions, and apply it to both RTs, compared to Morisset's first translation.<sup>9</sup> The numbers we found varied enormously, especially with regard to Hersant's RT: in the *incipit*, about 60% of the words were revised, while 40% occurred in Morisset. In other

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<sup>9</sup> MS Word's Compare function was designed to compare different versions of the same document, not to compare different translations, hence comes with some drawbacks, discussed in detail in Peeters, *forthc.*

passages, we found percentages between 30% and 50 % of revisions. In the second half of the novel, however, percentages dropped dramatically to a mere 5% of revisions (thus, 95% overlap). These numbers indicate that Hersant's RT is a hybrid translation product: sometimes a RT proper, sometimes a revision, and sometimes, indeed, a near-copy. As for Bouton-Kelly's RT of the first half of the novel, the number of revisions (differences in comparison with Morisset) were consistently higher than in Hersant, yet there was also overlap with the existing translations (both Morisset's and Hersant's), varying between 10% and close to 40% of the words, although she did not use those translations. It would therefore seem that a fair amount of overlap in RT is undeliberate, perhaps even unavoidable (confirming what Sanz Gallego *et al.* 2023 termed "unretranslatability"). The numbers we found prompted us to put forward an admittedly rough, quantitative 20-40-60 rule of thumb to distinguish between types of RTs: when revision percentages exceed 60% of the words in a RT compared to an existing translation, a RT brings much change and can therefore be considered polemical; a revision percentage of between 40 and 60% could indicate that a RT is more conservative; below that percentage, a translation product should probably be described as a hybrid of RT and revision (between 20 and 40%), if not as a revision (below 20%), and at worst, as a near-copy and, ultimately, plagiarism.

As for the question *what* of the existing translations was re-used, MSWord's Compare function used, produces a new file that contains both translation and RT in a single text, showing revisions in the RT as underlined insertions and strikethrough deletions, and overlaps with the existing translation in roman. The novel's *incipit*, for instance, was translated as follows. We shall first give the original passage, and then both RTs compared to the first translation:

O'Brien's *incipit* (1939: 9):

*Having placed in my mouth sufficient bread for three minutes' chewing, I withdrew my powers of sensual perception and retired to the privacy of my mind, my eyes and face assuming a vacant and pre-occupied expression. I reflected on the subject on my spare-time literary activities. One beginning and one ending for a book was a thing I did not agree with. A good book may have three openings entirely dissimilar and inter-related only in the prescience of the author, or for that matter one hundred times as many endings.*

Bouton-Kelly's (2015: II, 13) *incipit* – in underline and roman – compared to Morisset's (1969: 11) – in strikethrough and roman:

*Ayant place suffisamment de pain dans ma bouche pour trois minutes de mâchement, je modérais mes prédispositions aux perceptions sensorielles et me retirais dans l'intimité de mon esprit, mes yeux et mon visage avaient adopté un air vide et tourmenté. Je réfléchissais au sujet de mes activités littéraires mon passe-temps. Dans un livre, un seul début et une seule fin, ne me satisfaisaient pas. Un bon livre peut avoir trois débuts*

*fondièrement différents, uniquement liés dans l'imagination de l'auteur, ou des centaines de fins d'ailleurs.*

We found this method of 'palimpsestic reading' to greatly ease analysis, as translation and RT can be read in synopsis, while overlaps and changes in the RT's re-accentuation of the existing translation lay out open, on one and the same page. Our analyses conform to what we found earlier: revisions are mostly due to (a) the re-accentuation of standardisations and explications in Morisset, especially in Bouton-Kelly's RT although it was made without consulting Morisset's translation; and (b) the introduction of heteroglossia when rendering O'Brien's heteroglossic Irish-English (e.g. in compound words, such as "pre-occupied", "inter-related", "bevil-beaked", "fish-tailed", or syntactical deviations from idiomatic English) and direct translations from the Irish (e.g. the novel's title, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, which is a word-for-word translation of an Irish toponym, *Snámh-Dá-Éan* ([sna:wd{áé}nʲ], 'Swim-Two-Birds', i.e. 'the swimmable ford of the two birds'), that refers to a passage across the river Shannon in county Ros Comáin, mentioned in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Irish legend of *Buille Shuibhne* ([bʲuʲlʲə 'hʲuʲnʲə], 'the madness of [King] Sweeny'), that O'Brien had studied and partly translated in English in his youth, and incorporated much from in his novel. In Bouton-Kelly's RT, overlaps with Morisset (in roman, above) are mostly idiomatic or direct translations for which there were no real alternatives.

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

With this paper, we tried to answer the often repeated call for more theory-building in RTS, by arguing for an epistemology of change that may underpin RT poetics, conceptualising what changes, how, and with what effects, when a work of literature is retranslated. This required engaging critically with a number of received ideas that have stood in the way of developing new understandings and new methods for the analysis of RTs, in their textual as well as contextual historicity. In discussing that epistemology of change, which is entirely open to debate, we have concentrated on the relationship between two topical issues, namely (a) textual change (or difference), which can only be understood when (b) contextual change (or historical evolution) is duly considered. Bakhtin's theory of re-accentuation may bring such an epistemology, without text nor context coming first, by putting language use first, by which texts and contexts are dialogically intertwined. Texts are influenced (outside-in) by their historical and socio-ideological contexts, and voice these when absorbing heteroglossia, yet new texts (originals, translations, or RTs) also bring new voices, thus historical and socio-ideological change (inside-out), to their contexts.

A first point we made, thus is that contextual change is more than an external, explanatory factor for textual change. Change works both ways: RTs are different as contexts have changed, yet contexts also change as RTs are different. RTs *create* difference, as their use of language (i.e. how they render the ST material, including heteroglossia) reacts to another one, engaging it in a polemic by which it is presented as outdated.

RTs thus produce polemical change in the TC concerning how a work of literature is known, and also how an existing translation of that work is known.

The second important theoretical point put forward in these pages, concerns the much discussed ‘closeness’. The polemical change that RTs bring, is realised by bringing a changed idea of what ‘closeness to the ST’ means in the TC. RTs change the balance, in the TC, between what we termed S- and T-variables in the field of tension between simplification and complexification. Closeness in RT, put otherwise, should be approached, not as a supposedly objective measure of purported source-orientedness, but as a historically and culturally determined epistemological construct that strikes a balance between Toury’s adequacy and acceptability, and that evolves across texts-in-contexts. In that respect, ‘closeness’ is the very episteme of change in RT.

Third, the epistemology discussed, and the poetics that rests on it, includes a more critical view on some of the misleading received ideas concerning RT, that were borrowed, to a large extent, from publishers’ and translators’ paratexts. We should not simply accept the idea that RTs are closer to the ST, more faithful, more reliable, more readable, but study the content of closeness across translations, as the very epitome of change. Similarly, we should not accept the idea that RTs are made when existing translations are outdated, without considering that the latter are presented as such (because their language has aged, or for other reasons) when a new translation is marketed in the TC. And finally, we should not be misguided by publishers’ emphasis on the novelty of “new translations”. RTs are new events in the foreign reception process of a work of literature, but they are not entirely new translations; consequently, the part of non-retranslation (re-use or overlap) inherent in RT should be included in RT poetics.

In the cases we have analysed, the poetics of RT performs a re-dialogising (3.1), re-complexifying (3.2), palimpsestic (3.3) re-accentuation of how a given idea of ‘closeness’ was produced in existing translations. In these RTs, the balance in the construct of closeness in translation, shifts toward increased heteroglossia, thus toward the Second Stylistic Line of novelness and multivoicedness. That changing balance, away from explicitations and standardisations, challenges the notion of translation universals such as simplification.

We do, however, realise that the epistemology and methods of analysis we presented, are inspired by RTs of novels that are, already in the original, heteroglossic and multivoiced. Yet, many novels, especially the canonical classics of modern world literature that are studied the most in RT studies, *are* heteroglossic. Nonetheless, other types of re-accentuation may surely be found, and the ideas we put forward should be taken, not as yet another probabilistic universal, but as an epistemology that may bring new methods of study, independently of the RTH, and duly considering contextual as well as textual change. Much more analysis is needed, into the role played by heteroglossia and re-dialogisation, in RTs, in the dialogical interaction between source and target texts and contexts, and in canonisation; into how the idea of closeness evolves in subsequent translations; into how that may be different when concomitant RTs are involved; into how RTs’ novelty is presented and the polemic it creates; into the role played by competition between publishers in different, more or less centralised,

cultural systems; into how RTs challenge universals of translation; into the palimpsestic presence of existing translations in RTs; into the effects of retranslators consciously using or not using existing translations. That research into the poetics of RT should include other texts than the ones we have studied, other genres such as song, film or theatre translations, other languages, and other contexts. We can only hope that some of the ideas and avenues for research discussed in this paper may inspire such analyses and may have brought other understandings, that will also be re-accented, bringing change and further paving the way toward new paradigms for RT studies.

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**Zsuzsa Csikai**

## Playboy, Hero, Champion – Retranslations of J. M. Synge’s The Playboy of the Western World in Hungary

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### Abstract

*This paper looks at four Hungarian translations of John Millington Synge’s play, The Playboy of the Western World (1907) – the published first translation that introduced the Irish writer’s work to Hungarian readers in 1960 and three retranslations commissioned for specific theatre performances of the play (Nádasdy, 2004; Benedek, 2013; Hamvai, 2019). Through the case study, the paper investigates the ways in which Synge’s modern classic, rooted in the historical specificity of the Irish cultural nationalist movement in the early twentieth century, is enabled to speak, through translation and retranslation, to Hungarian audiences from 1960 to the present. The exploration of retranslations focuses on the rendering of unique language use in dramatic literature, in this case, dialect. The Hiberno-English dialect of the play is its most conspicuous and challenging feature, partly because it has manifold functions not easily transferrable for a non-Irish audience. The retranslators of Synge’s play approach the problems posed by translating dialect in various different ways, which in turn leads to the reaccentuation of different aspects of the play. The paper concludes considering the impact of retranslation on the play’s presence in Hungary with the observation that the strategies (re)translators use for rendering the play’s unique language is motivated by the context of the specific production, but in general, retranslation contributes significantly to the canonization of the play in Hungary.*

*Keywords: retranslation, J. M. Synge, drama translation, Hungarian drama translation*

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Zsuzsanna Csikai

## Playboy, Hero, Champion – Retranslations of J. M. Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* in Hungary

### Abstract

*This paper looks at four Hungarian translations of John Millington Synge’s play, The Playboy of the Western World (1907) – the published first translation that introduced the Irish writer’s work to Hungarian readers in 1960 and three retranslations commissioned for specific theatre performances of the play (Nádasdy, 2004; Benedek, 2013; Hamvai, 2019). Through the case study, the paper investigates the ways in which Synge’s modern classic, rooted in the historical specificity of the Irish cultural nationalist movement in the early twentieth century, is enabled to speak, through translation and retranslation, to Hungarian audiences from 1960 to the present. The exploration of retranslations focuses on the rendering of unique language use in dramatic literature, in this case, dialect. The Hiberno-English dialect of the play is its most conspicuous and challenging feature, partly because it has manyfold functions not easily transferrable for a non-Irish audience. The retranslators of Synge’s play approach the problems posed by translating dialect in various different ways, which in turn leads to the reaccentuation of different aspects of the play. The paper concludes considering the impact of retranslation on the play’s presence in Hungary with the observation that the strategies (re)translators use for rendering the play’s unique language is motivated by the context of the specific production, but in general, retranslation contributes significantly to the canonization of the play in Hungary.*

### Retranslation of drama as event

Discussions of drama translation often start with outlining the unique complexities that drama texts pose for translators and theorists alike because of the dual nature of dramatic texts as both literature and performance. Drama belongs to two different systems: as a piece of literature that is published and read, drama is part of the literary system. At the same time, as a script for a specific performance, a dramatic text also belongs to the theatrical system. Theorists have grappled with the question of how translation should relate to this duality, and, most importantly, what implications this has for the translator’s task.<sup>1</sup>

Drama translation, therefore, is often seen as a process that implies “simultaneous transfer into two forms of communication: monomedial literature (reading) and polymedial theatre (performance)” (SCHULTZE 1998: 178), and the reconciliation of these two allegiances of dramatic texts during translation seemed to be an inextricable

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed historical overview of the theory of drama translation, see Inmaculada Serón-Ordóñez “Theatre translation studies: An overview of a burgeoning field.”

conundrum and a subject of much theoretical discussion. It is realistic to claim, however, that a specific translation privileges one of these two systems, that is, the translation of a dramatic text is either produced as a text intended primarily for publication and reading, or it is commissioned and translated for a specific production of the play. As one of the first scholars dealing extensively with theatre translation, Susan Bassnett emphasizes, drama translation involves a decision on “whether to translate the text as a purely literary text, or to try to translate it in its function as one element in another, more complex system” (BASSNETT 2002: 129). The methods and strategies of the translator then are governed and motivated by this choice, which is not entirely of the translator, as indeed, the conditions of the commission translators receive has a considerable impact as well.

Because of the double nature of drama, performability and related notions often appear in connection with retranslation, usually cited as underlying reasons for creating a retranslation that is claimed to be better suited for a specific new performance than earlier ones. Also, the demands of performability are often used to justify idiosyncratic retranslation strategies and radical alterations introduced to the text, especially when the retranslation differs markedly from the first translation.

Translation and retranslation of drama are impacted by another crucially important aspect – the implications of theatre as an event, a communal experience embedded in the present. The rootedness of live theatre performance in the present, created to take place in a specific context for a specific audience, makes demands on the translation of the playtext. First, every specific production of a play is one of the countless potential stage realization of the play, consequently, every production is a unique interpretation of the text by the director and actors. A revival of a play needs to speak meaningfully to its new audience, and the role of the director and other theatre practitioners involved is to anchor in the presence of its audience a play written and performed in the past. In other words, a new event is created, offering a reinterpretation and re-accentuation of the original text, and theatre practitioners often feel it can be done most successfully through the play's retranslation. The notion of re-accentuation is useful to describe what is happening in retranslation, in the words of Peeters et al., “re-accentuation is a way of conceptualising the historical process of continuous reinterpretation of the classics” (PEETERS in the present collection; PEETERS & SANZ GALLEGÓ & PAULIS 2022).

Drama (re)translation is then an essential element of the event of the staging of a play in the concrete sense. At the same time, retranslation itself – and especially drama retranslation – may also be conceptualized as event. Peeters, in the present volume, claims that “retranslations should be defined not as new translations of the same text in the same language, but as new events in the foreign reception process of a work by which new translations bring changed interpretations, in changed languages, and changed target contexts” (PEETERS in the present collection). The event nature of the stage production of a retranslated play tends to generate a series of significant textual changes to earlier translations, so retranslation in this sense functions very much like (and in fact

is often the textual basis for) theatrical adaptation.<sup>2</sup> Similarly to an adaptation, a re-translation is bound to have a different linguistic shape and creates new resonances with the target audience, and the interpretation it offers differs from the interpretations earlier translations made possible – with every retranslation the process of re-accentuation takes place, that is, “the transferral of the original text and its characters to the novel soil of a different language and culture, which inevitably leads to a proliferation of multivalent meanings” (GRATCHEV 2022: 2). Consequently, questions of closeness that often arise regarding retranslation are peripheral to theatre retranslation as the new translation inevitably responds to the demands of its own context rather than to expectations of ‘faithfulness’ to the original text. The case study of the subsequent translations of Synge’s play into Hungarian will support the observation, especially relevant to the retranslation of dramatic texts, that “retranslation is a function of the dynamics of the target context, rather than a response to any inherent properties of the source text” (GÜRÇAĞLAR 2009: 236).

The most conspicuous of the inherent properties of the source text discussed here, J. M. Synge’s play, *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), is that it is written in a strong Hiberno-English dialect, which in itself poses an enormous challenge to translators of the play. The solution for rendering the play’s dialect takes strikingly different forms and the various retranslations re-accent different aspects of Synge’s work. It is important to note that Synge’s use of Hiberno-English dialect has important functions, both ideological and poetological. Synge’s use of dialect takes on larger ideological significance apart from providing realism or local colour to a play about Irish peasants. Writing a play in Hiberno-English for the Dublin literary theatre is an act of resistance to the colonial status, a challenge to the dominance of British standard English in the theatre, and British cultural domination in general, through elevating the Irish English dialect to the level of literature. Synge’s use of dialect in his play has poetological implications, too: the unique dialectal language is the source of the heightened lyricism and poetic quality of the play. At the same time, certain features of the play’s language including its eclecticism contribute to its powerful verbal comedy element. Retranslators’ opting for a specific strategy to render the dialectal language in the Hungarian retranslations inevitably foreground some of these aspects of Synge’s dialect while other aspects fade away.

### ***The Playboy of the Western World* – the politics and poetics of dialect**

Synge’s play, written and performed in 1907 in Dublin, is deeply embedded in its very specific cultural and political moment – the Irish Literary Revival, a cultural nationalist movement whose ambitious aim was to construct a strong and independent Irish culture for a nation on a course to claim its political independence of Britain. The play, however, is far from being a narrowly nationalistic play; it is a rich exploration of the

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<sup>2</sup> On theoretical discussions relating to the overlap between translation and adaptation see Laera (2019), Ladouceur (2012), and in Serón-Ordóñez (2014).

power of imagination and language to construct identity, a theme central to Irish nation-building at the time.

The play's plot revolves around a meek, downtrodden young man, Christy Mahon, who arrives as a stranger in a Mayo village to take refuge after allegedly murdering his domineering father. In the course of the play, Christy gains the admiration of the peasant community thanks to his imagination and poetic language use. Consequently, he becomes a self-assured and confident man who can liberate himself from the abuse and oppression his father inflicted on him. The theme of the liberating and self-constructing power of language and imagination was central to the ideas of the Irish Literary Revival, whose representatives believed in the potential of art to empower the people of Ireland and to change the cultural and, consequently, the political landscape of the country.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the language of Synge's play has a crucial cultural and political role – in a decolonizing, resistant move, the playwright intends to elevate the language of the rural inhabitants of Ireland to the level of literature. Synge uses the Irish English dialect, or Hiberno-English, which is significantly different from standard British English in terms of grammar and vocabulary. It is a so-called macaronic language, a mixture of Irish and English, characterized by a multitude of "irregular English grammatical structures" (DOLAN 1998: xxi), thanks to the presence of the Irish language substrate.

To create a literary Irish English, Synge artistically reconstructed a rural dialect, which is a patchwork of everyday Irish English dialects infused with lyricism and exoticism, which suited the Revival's aims to "put on stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland" and "to build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature" (GREGORY 1914) showing the dignity and heroism of Irish peasantry. Synge drew on what he saw as Irish "popular imagination that is fiery and magnificent and tender" (SYNGE 1981: 175) and produced a play where "reality" and "joy" were brought together on stage at the Abbey Theatre, the Irish national theatre, founded in 1904, for the advancement of a distinctive Irish drama.

The idiosyncratic Irish-English dialect Synge created for his plays highlights a paradox at the heart of the cultural nationalism of the Irish Revival – to construct their Irish national identity, Irish writers had the language of the colonizer at their disposal because by the late nineteenth century, the majority of the population had gradually become English monolingual speakers. Synge's response to this paradox was that "If he must write in English, (he) was resolved to write in an English as Irish as it is possible for English to be, an English into which toxins of the Gaelic mode of speech and syntax had been injected" (KIBERD 1979: 199).

What is Synge's dialect like? "In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple" (SYNGE 1981: 175), the playwright says in his preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*, his major play that is a perfect embodiment of his *ars poetica*. The language of the play is, on the surface, a realistic representation of the language used by

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<sup>3</sup> On Irish revival drama and cultural nationalism, see for instance Trotter, M. (2001) or Watson, J. G. (1994).

real-life Irish peasants, but “at the same time, the dialect is a studied artifact, exploited by Synge for poetic and dramatic purposes” (GRENE 1985: 60). The characters’ speeches closely resemble the simple, unsophisticated language used by the peasants of the West of Ireland<sup>4</sup>. However, the language is far from a straightforward rendering of Irish English, but an artificially and artistically created dialect. Synge imaginatively constructed a dialect based on the dialects of counties Kerry and Mayo, and that of the Aran Islands, and to this mix, he added archaic expressions, direct translations from Irish into English<sup>5</sup>, and even phrases he invented. His “dialogue is literally synthetic, in that he brings together dialect features from various parts of the country to suit his dramatic purposes” (GRENE 1985: 62). The result is a strange language full of vitality and energy, which Dublin audiences would recognise as unusual and even exotic, and as a result, highly poetic.

The rendering of dialect into another language and culture is one of the most challenging tasks, but translators of *The Playboy of the Western World* face an insurmountable obstacle in conveying the effects and connotations of Hiberno-English being the language of the play primarily because here “the language variety of the original play may have served an instrumental function which cannot be retained in the translation” (AALTONEN 2010: 108). Indeed, in the very different context of twentieth-century Hungarian culture, the political dimensions of *The Playboy*, primarily the dialect functioning as a means to help build a confident national and cultural identity during the Irish nationalist revival, are impossible to retain.

Dialect translation presents the translator with difficult decisions also because dialect is where equivalence between languages is the least likely to exist. A source culture dialect cannot be successfully translated using a target language dialect because, inevitably, there is a risk of unintended, misleading meanings and negative connotations to emerge (MASON & HATIM 1990: 40-41). Whatever existing target language dialect is opted for as a medium to render the source dialect, it will likely raise associations for the target language audience that are entirely different to the associations triggered by the original dialect, resulting in a sense of incongruity at best. Thus, the solution is often a “conservative one (...) respecting the target language expectations,” meaning that the translator avoids “challenging it with non-standard variants” (FEDERICI 2011: 10). This, in practice, means the complete omission or neutralization of the dialect.

Alternatively, translators may opt for a more “experimental approach” (FEDERICI 2011: 10), that is, when they indicate in some way that the language of the source text is not

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<sup>4</sup> Synge’s claim to authenticity seems convincing, he notes, “as with my other plays, I only used one or two words that I would not have heard in the countryside of Ireland or in my own childhood room before I was a newspaper reader. I also heard some of the turns I used from shepherds and fishermen on the coast between Kerry and Mayo, and from beggars and ballad singers in the areas closer to Dublin” (SYNGE 1981: 174).

<sup>5</sup> A direct translation from Irish: ‘playboy’ = ‘buchachaill báire’; “star of knowledge,” the translation of an Irish expression that occurs in Douglas Hyde’s translation of Irish songs titled *Love Songs of Connacht* (1893).

standard literary or urban language. One of the options to signal the presence of a dialect is borrowing (keeping some of the source text's expressions, usually realia), while another one is creating non-standard, irregular language use when the target culture's rules of linguistic norms and standards (whether it is spelling, grammar, or vocabulary) are violated. Yet another strategy is when the translator constructs an artificial dialect of the target language. These solutions, however, all involve considerable risk of distortion and misplaced interpretation. The Hungarian (re)translators of *The Playboy* made their own decisions on conservative or experimental approaches depending on their individual agendas, artistic purposes, and the broader socio-cultural context of the theatre production the translation was commissioned for. As a result, the Hungarian versions of the play create very different images for Synge's work, but also secure his place within the Hungarian theatrical canon.

### ***The Playboy of the Western World* retranslated and re-accented in Hungary**

Discussing the translation of literary language, Mason and Hatim assert that "since an important feature of poetic discourse is to allow a multiplicity of responses among source language readers, it follows that the translator's task should be to preserve, as far as possible, the range of possible responses" (1990: 11). This is an expectation that alludes to an ideal solution, but it is rather untenable. This case study of four translations of *The Playboy of the Western World* examines how a literary text with a multiplicity of potential layers of meaning, most of which is inextricably linked to the socio-cultural conditions of the time of its creation, resists the rendering of several of these features in a different language and culture. Instead, the successive translations of *The Playboy* perform a re-accentuation of certain features of the play (e.g., comic effect or covert erotic references) while disregarding others (e.g., dialect and its ideological implications), but the continuous reinterpretation and the resulting reshaping of the play ensure that it has a vibrant, continuing life in the receiving culture and, as a result, retranslation solidifies its canonicity in Hungary. The case study, therefore, illustrates that "retranslating and literary canon formation are indeed mutually dependent: retranslations help texts in achieving the status of a classic, and the status of a classic often promotes further retranslations" (KOSKINEN & PALOPOSKI 2016: 294).

### **TT1 – Tamás Ungvári's "introductory translation": *A nyugati világ bajnoka* (*The Champion of the Western World*, 1960)**

Hungarian readers and theatre audiences were introduced to Synge's play through the translation of the renowned writer, literary scholar, and translator Tamás Ungvári in 1960. Among the four translations of the *Playboy* examined here, it is the only one that was not commissioned for a stage performance. It is an eminent example of what Aaltonen calls "introductory translation" created for "a large and diverse audience of readers and theatre practitioners" and most often than not, published as literature. An introductory translation has "no concrete link with a particular theatrical production,

and the overall trigger to the translation process is usually found either in the publishing industry or promotional cultural centres. The expected life span of such is long” (AALTONEN 2010: 107).

Ungvári’s translation is a scholarly and literary translation that follows the original text’s content and structure closely, while stylistically, the language is a combination of colloquial and poetic language use. The strong dialect of Synge’s play, its most conspicuous stylistic feature, is almost completely omitted along with most of the culture-specific elements. There is no attempt at transferring Synge’s Irish English dialect into 1960s Hungarian; Ungvári’s translation opts for domesticating the dialect: the characters speak standard, colloquial, fluent Hungarian. What signals the Irishness of the play is some very basic realia – Irish names and Irish geographical references, and the peasant milieu is conveyed by a small number of old-fashioned Hungarian expressions that indicate that the play is set in a rural area sometime in the past.<sup>6</sup>

The rendering of one of Christy’s most poetic lines illustrates Ungvári’s overall domesticating strategy. Christy woes Pegeen, saying, “Isn’t there the light of seven heavens in your heart alone, the way you’ll be an angel’s lamp to me from this out, and I abroad in the darkness, spearing salmons in the Owen, or the Carrowmore?” (SYNGE 1981: 218). The translation conveys the poetry of the line and keeps the geographical names, but the dialectal non-standard grammar prevalent in Synge is neutralized into fluent, grammatically correct, standard Hungarian speech. As a sign of further acculturation, one culture specific term, ‘salmon’ becomes ‘trout’, a fish native to Hungarian rivers.<sup>7</sup>

When a translator opts for omitting the culture specific features of a work – dialect or realia – to compensate for the perceived loss, paratextual devices are used: a preface, afterword or postscript, translator’s commentary, footnotes, or a combination of these (SZYMAŃSKA 2017: 66) offer information on the cultural context to readers and audiences. Ungvári added an informative postscript to the Hungarian translation of the play, which provides a wealth of information on Synge’s life and times, his works, and its historical context, i.e., the Irish literary revival movement. As a true literary scholar, to introduce and approximate the Irish author to Hungarian readers, Ungvári draws a parallel between Synge and a major Hungarian poet, Endre Ady, an exact contemporary of the Irish writer, when he notes that both Synge and Ady were victims of misunderstanding and severe criticism because Synge, very much like Ady, “was promoting an idea of a nation that grows out of not self-aggrandizing praise but self-criticism, and he had the integrity to face the historical weaknesses and mistakes of his nation through realism, standing alone in the middle of a powerful, romantic mainstream” (UNGVÁRI 1960: 74-75, my translation). Emphasizing the kinship between Synge and the iconic poet Endre Ady, Ungvári invites the Irish playwright and his work into the Hungarian literary system, paving his way to canonization in Hungarian.

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<sup>6</sup> zsandár (22), kolompár (11), csoroszlya (20), kegyed, jólelkű nőszemély (19), vagy sarabolás (41). Provide English equivalent.

<sup>7</sup> „A te szívedből a hetedik mennyország fénye sugárzik. Angyalok lámpácskája leszel nekem pizstránglezen a sötét Owen vagy Carrowmore partján” (SYNGE 1960: 53).

The parallel may also be seen as an astute step in introducing Synge in socialist Hungary in the 1960s, as anything coming from Western Europe was looked at with suspicion, but aligning Synge with one of the greatest Hungarian writers could help to fend off any criticism on the part of the authoritarian cultural regime. Ungvári's introductory translation<sup>8</sup> proved to have a long lifespan; after the play premiered in 1960 theatres relied on his translation as an authoritative one for its revivals for four decades<sup>9</sup>, so the first translation is credited with introducing as well as establishing Synge's work in Hungary as a masterpiece of world literature. It was not until 2004 that a retranslation of the play by Ádám Nádasy appeared.

### TT2 – Ádám Nádasy: *A nyugat hőse* (Hero of the West, 2004)

Four decades after Ungvári's introductory translation, a new translation of *The Playboy of the Western World* was commissioned by Bárka Theatre in 2004. Unlike the introductory translation, a performance translation is "aimed at the reception in a particular theatrical context. It is intended to be received audiovisually, and its anticipated life span can vary from one production to many, even to an afterlife as an introductory translation" (AALTONEN 2010: 108). The new performance retranslation is the work of Ádám Nádasy, the renowned linguist, poet, and literary translator, who is also the most well-known and visible retranslator in the Hungarian literary scene: he has produced highly successful retranslations of a significant number of Shakespeare plays and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and he even created intralingual translations when he updated the language of Hungarian literary classics. With a view to make classics accessible to younger generations, he modernized the outdated language of a classic play by József Katona, *Bánk Bán* (1819) and a poetic drama by Imre Madách titled *Az ember tragédiája* (1862).

Reflecting on his project of retranslating Synge's play, Nádasy emphasizes the idea that retranslation offers difference and novelty. He says he intended to update the language moving it closer to contemporary audiences. To achieve this effect, he tuned the dialogues towards a more urbane style of expression in contrast to what he describes as the Hungarian folk style of Ungvári's translation. Nádasy justifies this choice by saying that the country-inflected style was the norm in the 1960s for translating plays about peasants, but it is not suitable anymore for the play's new audience (SEBŐK 2004: 11). Nádasy's emphasis on his version's difference to the first translation reveals that, as Venuti notes, retranslations have a "crucial awareness [of pre-existing translations] and justify themselves by establishing their differences from one or more previous

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<sup>8</sup> Ungvári revised his translation for the 1986 collection of Synge's plays in Hungarian, titled *J. M. Synge: Drámák* (Plays).

<sup>9</sup> According to OSZMI, the Institute and Museum of Hungarian Theatre History, nine stage productions of the play used Ungvári's translation between 1960 and 2004. <https://szinhaz-tortenet.hu/results/-/results/84f45dd5-1aba-4d1e-a85e-21fb995c878f/solr/0/24/score/desc#displayResult>

versions” (VENUTI 2004: 25). Difference in retranslation equals “novelty”, a new translation has to be justified by offering something new. Translators’ own pronouncements, however, should be treated with circumspection as they can be “partial and biased” (TOURY 1995, 65), and indeed, as a careful comparison of Ungvári’s and Nádasdy’s translations reveals, the retranslation is not radically different to the first translation. It is true that the Nádasdy version is written in fluent, unadorned, everyday language, but it is not marked out as noticeably “modern,” the text does not feature linguistic elements like contemporary slang, jargon, or colloquial expressions that would create a strikingly or markedly present-day style. Nor does the retranslation entirely do without the vocabulary of rural people and dated expressions,<sup>10</sup> which were the outdated features, Nádasdy claims, in Ungvári’s first translation. This illustrates Peeters observation that “translations are not necessarily replaced because they have aged; it can also be the other way around: they are replaced and therefore presented as having aged” (PEETERS in the present collection). Especially in drama translation for a specific theatrical performance, extratextual aspects (including who commissions the (re)translation and for what purpose in what context) play a role in the ways discourse about the new, retranslated play is shaped; after all, the retranslation is the creation of a new translator, for a new theatre in a new, changed cultural context, and it has to be promoted as such to ensure its success.

The translation of the unique Irish-English dialect created by Synge is approached by Nádasdy very similarly to the first translator: overall, Nádasdy, too, follows the strategy of neutralizing dialect and domesticating culture-specific elements of the text. Nádasdy explains that, “since the translation was made for a stage performance, I considered the stage effect more important than philological accuracy. Therefore, I omitted some of the Irish references that are difficult for the Hungarian audience to understand (e.g., ‘Patcheen’, the nickname for Patrick) or replaced them with comprehensible ones” (SYNGE/NÁDASDY 2004: 1). The director of the production, László Bérczes agreed that lines with Irish themes should be cut, because as he saw, “It has its drawbacks if in a comedy something is too complicated, foreign, or not immediately understandable – it slows the play down” (SEBŐK 2004: 13).

Nádasdy, similarly to the first translator, balanced the neutralization of the original dialect and the omission of references to Irish culture by providing rich paratextual material in the offprint of the play’s text. Most importantly, a welcome addition to the play is Nádasdy’s translation of Synge’s preface expressing his *ars poetica* (it was not included in the first translation). The offprint also contains Nádasdy’s “translator’s notes,” where he outlines his approach to the retranslation of the play and shares useful and intriguing linguistic and cultural information that ranges from the correct

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<sup>10</sup> Shawn talking to Pegeen uses the verb “óv,” an old-style expression for ‘protect,’ hardly in currency among young people: „Akarod, hogy itt maradjak veled és **óvjalak?**” (SYNGE/NÁDASDY 2004: 5). Pegeen to Christy sounds decidedly old fashioned: “Mert maga igen **szemrevaló legény**, és **nemes tekintetű**” (5); or: “**Jócskán megfélemlenék** én is attól az embertől, **amondó vagyok**” (6). The expressions in bold are examples for a quaint, dated style.

pronunciation of Synge's name, through a discussion of the controversial premiere of the play in Ireland to its first Hungarian translation and production.

The translator's introduction to the playtext contains a series of footnotes, which explain various Irish culture related phenomena and expressions (including an explanation of poteen, jobbing jockeys, etc.) One of the most important culture-specific elements, the title, is discussed from the perspective of translation since every element of it poses a challenge to Hungarian translators. Nádasdy explains how "the Western World" has opposing connotations for Irish and Hungarian audiences as in the European, including Hungarian tradition, the phrase refers to the civilized (i.e., Christian) world, Europe, as opposed to the exotic East, Asia (SYNGE/NÁDASDY 2004: 2). In Hungary, a country that for decades belonged to the 'Eastern Block,' 'the West' has a further, culture-specific connotation: the word is closely associated with the notions of progressive, affluent, highly advanced democratic countries in Western Europe that Hungary was at the time excluded from. In the Irish context, however, 'The West,' raises very different associations: the play takes place in the westernmost part of Ireland, "the Western world," described in the play as "the lonesome west." Within Ireland, it is an area that is underdeveloped, backward, and rural. Largely due to these qualities, however, the West of Ireland served for the Gaelic Revival as the archaic and pastoral site of origins, untouched by modernisation and progress, where remnants of the pre-colonial Irish past, for instance, the Gaelic language, were preserved, so the West of Ireland provides a source of inspiration for many of the Irish Literary Revival writers. Consequently, even the closest, direct translation of "the western world" will unavoidably be interpreted by Hungarian audiences very differently from what it means in its source context.

The "playboy" element of the title creates a different problem. It demands creativity on the part of the Hungarian translator as the English word has been present in Hungarian as a borrowing, thanks to the publication of the magazine titled *Playboy* in Hungary since the late twentieth century, but of course the word has a very different meaning in Synge's play. Therefore, the translators all tried to find a solution that conveys the original meaning, and Ungvári's first, introductory translation that led to the canonization of the text in Hungarian opts for "bajnok" i.e., "champion;" in contrast, Nádasdy changes the word to "hős", meaning "hero." Changing the title used in the first, introductory translation already signals novelty, as it befits a retranslation that posits itself as new and different.

Overall, the first retranslation of *The Playboy* emphatically and purposefully differentiates itself from the introductory translation through certain translation choices (a new title, for instance), and even more emphatically through the paratextual material as a way of justifying that the retranslation is necessary and creates novelty. A thorough comparison reveals, however, that in terms of its overall translation strategy (its approach to dialect translation and modernizing the language of the play) the retranslation of *The Playboy* into Hungarian does not significantly or conspicuously differ from the first translation. The translator's and director's shared approach to dialect translation, that is, their decision that the dialect and Irish references should be domesticated

so as the comedy aspect is foregrounded diminishes the ideological and poetological function of the original dialect.

**TT3 – Zsolt Benedek: *A nyugati világ bajnoka* (The Champion of the Western World, 2013)**

In 2013, György Harag Company of the Transylvanian Theatre named Szatmárnémeti Északi Színház staged *The Playboy*, under the same title as the introductory translation. According to the program note, Zsolt Benedek, the dramaturg, retranslated the play relying on the English language original text, and he claimed he had “a dual purpose as he attempts, on the one hand, to render Synge’s flavoursome Irish dialect into Hungarian, and on the other, to make the play’s themes relevant in the contemporary reality of Transylvania” (szinhaz.hu, n. pag., my translation).

In order to foreground the representation of Transylvanian reality through the play, Benedek introduces textual changes on such a large scale that the retranslation is closer to an adaptation than a translation, and the re-accentuation process results in a play with significant differences in terms of both meaning and style. The carnivalesque dimension of Synge’s comedy, for instance, is foregrounded just like the folk, or peasant milieu, while the play’s lyrical qualities almost disappear.

Benedek has a novel approach to rendering the Irish-English dialect, and in the process, he changes the image of Synge’s play shaped by Ungvári’s and Nádasdy’s translations. Thus, his retranslation is posited as significantly different from the two preceding translations. Benedek departs from the neutralization strategy preferred by Ungvári and Nádasdy when he opts for creating an artificial dialect that combines existing target language dialects and pseudo-dialectal elements assembled by the translator. The result is a highly idiosyncratic Hungarian dialectal language created similarly to the method Synge used to create his play’s dialect, however, its function and effect obviously cannot be the same. Synge intended to represent the rich poetic imagination of the Irish peasants that fascinated him and, at the same time, he wanted to position the Irish-English dialect as the literary language on the Irish stage. In contrast, what Benedek’s artificial dialect achieves is the foregrounding of grotesque comedy and diminishing realism and poetry, and it also reduces the multiplicity of layers of interpretation the original text offers.

Benedek attempts to render Synge’s style into Hungarian through an eclectic artificial language, however, he goes even further in creating a unique style. The retranslation exhibits robust textual changes: first, the translator added a disproportionately large number of sentences and utterances to the original text and second, he introduces a torrent of tautological expressions to the speeches of the characters, creating a strong, new stylistic feature. Shawn’s and Pegeen’s speeches, in particular, abound in tautology, although there is little evidence of this in the original play. The constant, pointless and even inane instances of repetition become central traits of the characters. As a result of these alterations, the comic effect is strengthened, but at the expense of characterisation. The

villagers are portrayed as simple-minded, uneducated, inarticulate, and even primitive,<sup>11</sup> while their other qualities disappear. Overall, the sense of dialect is preserved, but it is exaggerated in an attempt to transpose the Irish peasants' idiosyncratic speech patterns in a way that it is identifiable as a dialect in the Transylvanian context.

The artificial language variety created by Benedek, just like Synge's, is synthesizing, consisting of elements taken from many geographical variants and linguistic levels of the Hungarian language, but the accusation levelled at Synge that his is an artificial and false language seems to be rather apt here. The artificial dialect is constructed of Transylvanian dialectal vocabulary (*berbécs, koslatott*), other colloquial expressions (*bandzsali* used in East Hungary), and obsolete forms (*ürdöng*, a word resembling archaic Hungarian words (but in fact used by József Romhányi in the animated TV series, *The fantastic adventures of the Mézga family*) and irregular linguistic structures typical of regional dialects (the sense of dialect is created through an overwhelming number of non-existent verb tenses); as well as phonetic transcriptions to indicate dialectal accent (*hóttat, tunnám, üjjön*). The presence of vernacular and artificial vernacular elements in themselves would not stand out conspicuously, but the density of their occurrence makes the play's language particularly contrived and more like a caricature of simple people's style.

Many added lines contain explicit sexual references, either to strengthen the grotesque humour of the play or to foreground the theme of sexual violence. Pegeen's words of praise for Christy's gift of fine talk are rendered rather explicitly: "Even cold old women would get wet from such words, and they would come back from the grave as young girls ..." (38, my back translation). One of the village girls, Sarah, however, has a lengthy speech referring to sexual violence present in the village community: "I carve a pendant out of it, God help me, I wear it around my neck, and if old Joseph Quinn attacks me again, I thrust it into him, God help me, straight into his asshole, saying: I was brave too, just like the lad who slayed his dad, God help me, he won't finger me anymore, he won't molest me anymore, God help me!" (SYNGE/BENEDEK 2013: 19, my back translation).

Benedek's retranslation strategy for rendering the dialect together with the changes introduced to the play's text re-accentuate, or even disproportionately magnify, certain features of the original work, for instance, the intellectual poverty of the villagers, the grotesque humour and the sexual innuendos that are traceable in the original but do not feature so prominently. At the same time, other characteristics – the poetry and lyricism of the language – become barely perceptible. The central theme of Synge's tragicomedy, the idea that language and imagination have the creative power to construct a new individual (and national) identity, is hardly perceptible.

Overall, Benedek's retranslation, or rather, adaptation, simplifies the stylistic and thematic complexity of the original play because what it re-accentuates is a rather self-

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<sup>11</sup> Shawn: "as if they could hear the nowhere, nowhere, nowhere, but a soul-something, once they're stilted with fear like it stils, eh." (2); Pegeen: "There is nothing here but the great stinking nothing, nothing, if that is what it is" (3); or "His language is heavy, but beautiful, even if it is heavy" (my back translation, SYNGE/BENEDEK 2013: 79).

serving grotesque humour linked closely to dialectal language. This approach may have been motivated by the retranslator's intention to render Synge's dialect for the target audience in a form that presumably allows Hungarian speakers in Transylvania to relate to the plot and characters on stage.

#### **TT4 Kornél Hamvai: *A nyugat császára* (Emperor of the West, 2019)**

The most recent retranslation of *The Playboy* for the Hungarian stage was created by writer, translator, and playwright Kornél Hamvai for a 2019 production of the play by Pesti Színház, a theatre in Budapest. Among the four translations discussed here, Hamvai's translation of the play into today's colloquial Hungarian is the most strikingly contemporary and, therefore, the most novel version. Overall, the rural Irish English dialect is transformed into contemporary language use, but it is not a standard 'literary' version of the Hungarian language, but one suffused with slang and profanities, so a more urbane sense of setting replaces the peasant milieu. Despite the dominant low-brow style characters communicate in, traces of the pervading lyricism of Synge's play are preserved.

Paratext is, again, an important part of project; Hamvai's retranslation is accompanied by footnotes, in which the translator discusses specific solutions and provides information on the cultural and literary history of the play. Hamvai notes, for example, that Synge's phrase, "the lonesome West," is directly borrowed by Martin McDonagh, the contemporary playwright and filmmaker, for his play, *The Lonesome West*; elsewhere, he explains that Shawn and Pegeen are waiting "on Father Reilly's dispensation from the bishops, or the Court of Rome" because they are first cousins who intend to get married. Hamvai talks of his decision to neutralize the strong dialectal nature of the original text, justifying it as an attempt to "avoid everything (linguistic archaism, culturally specific expressions) that would be incomprehensible to the Hungarian audience today when listening to a live dialogue on stage (SYNGE/HAMVAI). Instead of using or creating a peasant dialect, he says he decided to set the play in the present of its audience, rendering it in "lower middle-class colloquial language" (SYNGE/HAMVAI), and indeed, the highly fragmented structure of the dialogue and the prevalence of contemporary slang, jargon, swearwords, and vulgar expressions all work towards the creation of a sense of contemporary colloquial dialogue.

Pegeen's speech describing the village's inbred population illustrates this shift of style. She says,

*It's a wonder, Shaneen, the Holy Father'd be taking notice of the likes of you; for if I was him I wouldn't bother with this place where you'll meet none but Red Linahan, has a squint in his eye, and Patcheen is lame in his heel, or the mad Mulrannies were driven from California and they lost in their wits. We're a queer lot these times to go troubling the Holy Father on his sacred seat* (177).

The passage is full of irregular grammatical features that mark the language as a strong Hiberno-English dialect, which the translator renders into a speech that abounds in contemporary Hungarian colloquial expressions, including vulgar phrases. In back translation, the Pope has a “customer service”, and Pegeen warns Shawn that given their abject “image”, they should not be “fucking with” the Pope<sup>12</sup>. Most of the idiomatic and vulgar expressions are culturally specific ones rooted in the Hungarian urban audience’s contemporary reality.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from creating a sense of contemporaneity, the Hungarian retranslation also recreates the play’s grotesque humour. The lowbrow, urban characters’ idiosyncratic style (unintentionally distorted, and so humorous expressions) and vulgar language are combined with surprisingly poetic images, a combination that becomes the source of absurd and grotesque humour, a central feature in Synge play. During a fight, Christy warns his opponents: “Mert odabaszok még egy olyat, hogy itt mindenkinek az őrangyala lefossa a felhőt, amin ül” (61) (in my back translation: I’m fucking hit you so hard that all your guardian angels will shit the cloud they’re sitting on!) while Pegeen expresses her heartbreak at losing Christy: “Menj a picsába. *(fejére kapja a kendőt, panaszos)* A szívem megszakad, elvesztettem. A Nyugat császárárt elvesztettem örökre” (SYNGE/HAMVAI 2019: 66). (“Fuck off! My heart is breaking, I have lost him. I have lost the emperor of the Western world for ever.” My back translation).

The most recent retranslation of the play conveys to the Hungarian audience Synge’s vibrant, energetic language use and the grotesque humour it often brings about. In doing so, Hamvai updates the dialogue and shifts language use towards an intensively contemporary, energetic, and humorous style that triggers verbal humour that often verges on vulgarity. What in Synge was simple peasant people’s talk, in Hamvai’s translation becomes urban lowbrow parlance, both recognisable and surprising for twenty-first-century audiences, recreating the effect of the unusual style of dialogue had on its first Dublin audience. The retranslation offers yet another new image for Synge’s work, one that blends into its new twenty-first-century Hungarian context, re-accenting the play’s carnivalesque aspects.

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<sup>12</sup> My backtranslation of the Hungarian version: ”Pont a pápa, Shawn, annak van ingerenciája veled foglalkozni az ügyfélszolgálatán. Ezzel a nyomortanyával. Hát a szmöre Linahan bandzsa, a Patcheen bokából lifeg, az egész Mulrannie család meg túl őrült volt még Kaliforniához is, és kiutasították őket. A mi imázsunkkal, tudod, nem kéne nekünk innen, mostanában, a pápát baszkurálni” (SYNGE/HAMVAI 2019: 3).

<sup>13</sup> Slang expressions: “elrohadt a lábam,” “itt nyugi van,” “vagyon elleni tényállás” (8), “menő gazdálkodó,” “hülyeségeket tudsz ám beszélni” (9), “kibarchobázod,” “partvis” (10) “tökös gyerek,” “zombik” (12), “besokalltál” (15), “kicsinálta a férjét” (19), “csajoztál,” “hozza a rutinosat” (32), “rohadt korán,” “annyit ment, hogy eszméletlen” (24), “debil nyálgép,” “gajra mentem” (49). Swearwords and vulgar expressions abound too: “hazudós kurva” (14), “amatőr szarlapátoló proosztóknak,” “kurvaélet” (27), “Akurva! Ilyen nincs, jézusisten bazmeg!” (36), “a halál faszára küldik magukban” (17). Provide backtranslations.

## Conclusion

Dramatic texts, along with sacred texts and canonical literary works, are the most frequently retranslated literary texts (GÜRÇAĞLAR 2009: 233). A modern theatre classic, Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, saw its first translation in Hungary in 1960, and since then, it has been retranslated three times into Hungarian. The play's rootedness in its immediate cultural and political reality, the Irish Revival movement, and the use of strong rural dialect would not warrant such an interest in the re-interpretation and retranslation. However, like all great literature, Synge's play deals with complex themes exploring the human condition and makes possible several layers of interpretation. It is a coming-of-age story, a story of first love, a story of liberation, and, most importantly, it is also a story about the power of language and imagination to construct identity and a story about the role of peer's appreciation in nurturing a healthy, strong self. Powerful dialogue, the combination of lyricism and grotesque humour, and credible psychological motivation behind the absurd and comic actions of the characters all make *The Playboy* a rewarding and valuable drama for twenty-first-century audiences beyond the borders of Ireland.

As performance translations, all three Hungarian retranslations of the play are motivated by the conditions related to the specific performance they were created for. Nádasdy's first retranslation comes nearly four decades after the introductory translation published. This significant temporal gap is used automatically to claim the alleged aging of the first translation, and consequently, in the paratextual material added by the translator the retranslation is posited as a necessary updating of the text. Nádasdy, an erudite scholar and acclaimed writer, created a scholarly and, at the same time, writerly literary translation, which, however, does not radically differ from the first translation – it applies the same domesticating strategy for dialect and realia, while the modernisation of the language of the dialogue is not conspicuous. The next two retranslations are more vehemently performance-oriented and offer genuine novelty in their treatment of the original text's idiosyncratic linguistic and stylistic features. Benedek emulates Synge's method in creating an artificial rural dialect of Transylvania for the Transylvanian theatre company's production and foregrounds the grotesque, carnivalesque humour, re-accentuating, an even exaggerating these stylistic features of the play to the point of burlesque. The most recent translator, Hamvai uses a modernised, urban language for a theatre in Budapest and the emphasis is also on the comic through the translator's amplification of lowbrow, vulgar colloquial style. The Irish cultural, socio-political layers and meanings that stem from Synge's engagement with the colonial conditions of Ireland seem to resist (re)translation into Hungarian as they do not resonate with the historical specificity of the particular contexts in which these retranslations were produced.

The three retranslations, with their re-accentuation of the play's various aspects, all create a meaningful event for their Hungarian-language audiences whether in Budapest or Transylvania. These case studies illustrate that retranslations, or, "multiples of one" in Deane-Cox words, "should be viewed as instantiations of the interpretive potential of the source text" (DEANE-COX 2014: 18). Retranslation is a creative cultural activity

that extends in time and spreads geographically the capacity of the source text to offer new interpretations and experiences for a new audience. Doing so, retranslation also enhances the visibility of the source text, contributing to its canonization in the receiving culture.

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Izabela Szymańska

## Style and Status in Retranslating Childrens' Classics On the History of Polish Translations of Kipling's Just So Stories

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### Abstract

*This paper examines the 2018 Polish retranslation of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories (1902) against the background of the earlier Polish renditions of this book, interpreting the re-translator's and publisher's approach in terms of tendencies that can be observed on the Polish market of children's books as regards retranslations of canonical titles. It traces the history of the Polish translations of the book, starting in 1903, in order to bring out the evolving approach of publishers to the integrity of the source text, reflecting its changing status. The analysis also concerns the changing approach to the special features of style exhibited by Kipling's stories such as alliteration, rhymes, syntactic parallelisms, repetitions, and neologisms, which are integral to the text that was originally intended to be read aloud and drew very creatively from the tradition of oral texts. The evolving approach to rendering this very distinct and challenging style, with the newest retranslation reflecting it much more consistently than the previous translations, is interpreted in connection with the changes in the hierarchy of functions ascribed to children's literature in the Polish context and with the changing reception of the original, which has grown into the status of a canonical text.*

*Keywords: Just So Stories, Polish, retranslation, style, status*

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Izabela Szymańska

## Style and Status in Retranslating Children's Classics.

### On the History of Polish Translations of Kipling's *Just So Stories*

#### Abstract

*This paper examines the 2018 Polish retranslation of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories (1902) against the background of the earlier Polish renditions of this book, interpreting the re-translator's and publisher's approach in terms of tendencies that can be observed on the Polish market of children's books as regards retranslations of canonical titles. It traces the history of the Polish translations of the book, starting in 1903, in order to highlight the evolving approach of publishers to the integrality of the source text, reflecting its changing status. The analysis also concerns the changing approach to the special features of style exhibited by Kipling's stories such as alliteration, rhymes, syntactic parallelisms, repetitions, and neologisms, which are integral to the text that was originally intended to be read aloud and drew creatively from the tradition of oral texts. The changing approach to rendering of this very distinct and challenging style is evaluated based on the changes in the hierarchy of functions ascribed to children's literature in the Polish context and on the evolving reception of the original, which has grown into a canonical text since it was first published.*

#### Introduction

This paper will analyse the recent Polish retranslation of Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* (2018) juxtaposing it with its earlier Polish renditions, to interpret its publication and the retranslator's approach in terms of some tendencies that can be observed on the Polish market of children's books as regards retranslations of canonical titles.

The approach taken in the following discussion combines comparative textual analysis of subsequent Polish translations of *Just So Stories* with investigating their publication history in order to identify the factors that might have influenced their translators' choices, in accordance with Koskinen and Paloposki's view that such a combination facilitates research towards the understanding of retranslation as a phenomenon (cf. 2019: 35). The widely quoted Retranslation Hypothesis, derived from Antoine Berman's ideas (cf. DEANE-COX 2014: 2-5), assumes that "later translations (same ST, same TL) tend to be closer to the original than earlier ones" (CHESTERMAN 2017: 132). However, various researchers have demonstrated that particular data from particular cultures and times reveal different fluctuating patterns of retranslations, which need to be considered and interpreted in their cultural contexts, which is disregarded by the Retranslation Hypothesis (cf. the discussion in DEANE-COX 2014: 6-18, 189-193; PALOPOSKI & KOSKINEN 2004) and that a multitude of factors connected for instance with agency, audience, the state of the receiving system, or ideology should be taken into

account when investigating retranslations. Generally subscribing to the view that profiles of retranslations are shaped by a variety of factors, I will try to demonstrate that major motives for the 2018 retranslation can be sought in two areas, which for short I call “style” and “status”.

For the purpose of translation analysis “style” may be understood as regular occurrence in a text of certain types of lexical items, syntactic structures, and rhetorical devices chosen by the author from among those offered by the language as a whole. In analysing literary translations vital questions are what artistic and communicative function the style plays in the original (cf. LEECH & SHORT 2008: 9-32), how/to what extent it is reflected in the target text, how the manner of its rendition affects the interpretation of the target text, and what factors impact its rendition.

My understanding of “status” is inspired by Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory (1990) and its application to research on children’s literature translation proposed by Shavit (1980, 1981, 2006). The key assumption of the polysystem approach is that the peripheral position and low status of translations in general or of particular genres or individual texts in the given target polysystem is correlated with more manipulation being allowed in translating to produce target texts fitting into the target system’s models and conventions, and thus acceptable in the target culture at the given time, while, conversely, their central position and higher status tends to result in more adequacy to the source text.

O’Connell, taking into account such factors as translators’ prestige, pay and working conditions, points to the crucial impact of the low status of both original and translated children’s literature on the approach taken by its publishers, who can pressure translators into adhering to established domestic conventions (cf. 2006: 18-21). An interesting example of this phenomenon in the Polish context is found in Dyla-Urbańska’s (cf. 2000: 202-207) account of her negotiations with the publisher over the rendition of slang, colloquial language and vocabulary concerning sex in her translation of Joanna Nadin’s *The Rachel Riley Diaries*, with the publisher wanting those stylistic features to be mitigated<sup>1</sup> to produce a less controversial text than the translator proposed. A tendency noticeable in Polish translations for children is that even though the domestication of cultural references is much less common than several decades ago, when it was a norm, domestication in the sense of producing fluid, “correct”, stylistically acceptable texts, conforming to the literary conventions of the target culture (cf. VENUTI 1995: 1-39) is still quite widely applied (cf. BORODO 2017: 67-71, 143-149, 159-161), which often involves mitigation (cf. e.g. SZYMAŃSKA 2021) or neutralising marked language varieties, such as regional dialects or slang (cf. e.g. LOOBY 2015: 171-175; DZIAŁOWY 2022: 175-196).

Such tendencies are accounted for by Shavit’s generalisation that translators of children’s literature, due to its peripheral position in literary polysystems, are permitted

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<sup>1</sup> “Mitigation” is understood here as a type of manipulation in translation aimed at “toning down potentially controversial issues and taboo subjects such as those related to death, alcohol, sex, the human body, and bodily functions, children’s supposedly inappropriate conduct, or criticism directed at adults” (BORODO 2011: 331), which can be extended to toning down “inappropriate” use of language.

(and in view of the above example we could add “and even expected”) to manipulate the text in various ways in order to make it appropriate and useful to young readers, in accordance with what society regards at a certain point in time as educationally good for the child (cf. SHAVIT 2006: 26). It is only in the last few years that some Polish publishers have become more open to including dialectal stylisation, everyday language, slang or idiolects in translated classics for young readers, giving translators more freedom to experiment with marked styles (cf. e.g. SZYMAŃSKA 2016b, 2017; PIELORZ 2020: 118), as evidenced for instance by a 2012 retranslation of Frances H. Burnett’s *The Secret Garden*, a 2023 retranslation of Eleanor H. Porter’s *Pollyanna*, a 2022 retranslation of Ferenc Molnár’s *A Pál utcai fiúk* or two retranslations of L. M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* cycle published in the 2020s. Such cases may be signals of a new norm just starting to emerge against entrenched older norms (cf. TOURY 2012: 76-77 on conflicting norms; DU-NOUR 1995 on retranslations as evidence of changes in translation norms)) and in the children’s subsystem of the Polish literary polysystem as regards the relative importance ascribed to rendering marked, unusual styles in translation and the appropriateness and usefulness of giving young readers access to such styles. This, in turn, may be related to a shift in the hierarchy of functions ascribed to children’s literature, with entertaining and imagination-stirring functions (often performed by the unusual use of language) gaining more importance with time, as evidenced by the edutainment trend in the production of texts for young readers in general (cf. BORODO 2017: 137-139) or by increasing attention to rendering or even enhancing wordplay and other humorous effects in classics such as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (cf. SZYMAŃSKA 2015: 44-47, 2016). The case to be analysed below will highlight the changing approach to the importance of the author’s extraordinary style, contributing to the investigation of this possible shift.

### **The original**

Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories* (henceforth *JSS*) is a collection of twelve short tales, illustrated by the author himself, with a commentary to each picture overtly addressing the reader and sometimes encouraging to ask questions or colour the picture. The drawings are often symbolic, intricate and far from purely illustrative. Each tale is followed by a poem of loosely connected content. In *JSS*, Kipling combined various forms of literary and visual expression to keep the attention of young readers and involve them into the story.

The stories were first published as a collection in 1902, and even though they had been previously printed individually in magazines, it should be stressed that the cycle, together with the illustrations, is an integral whole, exhibiting a very clear idea and structure. Most of them are origin stories, as is clear from the titles,<sup>2</sup> providing an imaginary

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<sup>2</sup> “How the Whale Got His Throat”, “How the Camel Got His Hump”, “How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin”, “How the Leopard Got His Spots”, “The Elephant’s Child”, “The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo”, “The Beginning of the Armadillos”, “How the First Letter Was Written”, “How the

explanation of some phenomenon. The same pattern is followed even in cases when the title does not overtly indicate an origin story. For example, “The Elephant Child” explains how the elephant got its trunk, while “The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo” tells the story of how the kangaroo became an outstanding jumper.

A comment is needed as regards the title *Just So Stories*, since it is relevant both for the interpretation of the book and for translation issues. The origin of the title was explained by Kipling in a preface to the first tale published in 1897 in *St Nicolas Magazine*. The author wrote that the first three stories (*Whale*, *Camel* and *Rhinoceros*) were good-night stories told to his daughter, and had to be always told “just so” (in exactly the same way), otherwise the little addressee did not fall asleep, so with time they became almost like incantations (KIPLING 1998: 2). The preface with this explanation was not included in the book editions until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which will prove relevant for the analysis of the titles of Polish translations.

Literary scholars identify a wealth of inspirations behind *JSS*, including Indian, African and Aboriginal legends, the Bible, the Quran, *Arabian Nights*, Aesop's fables or the *Odyssey*, as well as Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (cf. HUNT 1994: 101; LEWIS 1998: xxii-xxx; LERER 2008: 182-185; GRENBY 2014: 17; DILLINGTON 2020: 497-505; SHAW 2022: 9-11), and point to both subtle interpretations available to experienced well-read audiences and the imagination-stirring and exploratory qualities so attractive to young recipients. Thus, the duality of address, stressed as one of crucial traits of children's literature by many researchers of its translation (cf. e.g. SHAVIT 1980; ADAMCZYK-GARBOWSKA 1988: 137-139; KNOWLES & MALMKJÆR 1996: 12-13; DOLLERUP 2003: 82; O'CONNELL 2006: 17; LATHEY 2006: 12-15; OITTINEN 2006: 35-36; LATHEY 2016: 16-17), is very conspicuous in this case (cf. DILLINGTON 2020: 493-502), even though the book emerged from oral stories specifically addressed to Kipling's own children and young cousins (LEWIS 1998: xvi-xix; SHAW 2022: 8).

The orality of *JSS* is now perceived as the greatest novelty and value of this book. As pointed out by Hunt:

*In the oral tale, Kipling contributed a very rare, perhaps unique, instance of tales told to his children and transposed meticulously into print, with the Just So Stories. Highly personal, immediate and whimsical, they are a stylistic tour de force. The prose is full of patterns, exact repetitions, and family dialect: one of the family, Angela Mackail, wrote that 'The Just So Stories' are a poor thing in print compared with the fun of hearing them told in Cousin Ruddy's deep unhesitating voice. There was a ritual about them.' [...] Elements in them have passed into oral tradition – another measure of the classic.* (HUNT 1994: 101)

Similarly, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* stresses that *JSS* are “a rare example of oral telling being transferred to the page: [...] the ritualistic, incantatory

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Alphabet Was Made”, “The Crab that Played with the Sea”, “The Cat that Walked by Himself”, “The Butterfly that Stamped”. One-word abbreviations will be used henceforth.

patterns and rhythms [...] demonstrate a delight in the intricacies of language” (ZIPES 2006: 368). Kipling shows the reader the joy of playing with words, exploring new interpretative possibilities, and activating lexis in new ways, which places him in the tradition started by Lewis Carroll and leading to James Joyce (cf. LEWIS 1998: xl-xli). The “patterns” that contribute to the unique, linguistically magical style are: repetitions of lexical items and syntactic structures, rhythm, rhymes, alliteration, puns and neologisms, and exotic names.

The following examples have been selected to demonstrate the patterns in fragments where they occur with high density. Extract 1, from the *Whale* story, features alliteration, rhymes, consonances, modified spelling, lexical repetitions and the unusual word *cetacean*.

Ex. 1<sup>3</sup>

*In the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes. He ate the starfish and the garfish, and the crab and the dab, and the plaice and the dace, and the skate and his mate, and the mackereel and the pickereel, and the really truly twirly-whirly eel. All the fishes he could find in all the sea he ate with his mouth--so! Till at last there was only one small fish left in all the sea, and he was a small 'Stute Fish, and he swam a little behind the Whale's right ear, so as to be out of harm's way. Then the Whale stood up on his tail and said, 'I'm hungry.' And the small 'Stute Fish said in a small 'stute voice, 'Noble and generous Cetacean, have you ever tasted Man?' (KIPLING 1998: 3)*

Extract 2, from the *Elephant* story, illustrates alliteration again, as well as repetition of words and phrases, repetition of syntactic structures, playing with a contracted word form *satiabile*, which activates in the recipient's mind two words, *satiabile/insatiabile*, crucial for the story as the Elephant's seemingly insatiable curiosity<sup>4</sup> is satisfied in one matter with interesting results. Ex. 3, from the same story, abounds in alliteration and repetitions, and has a highly onomatopoeic quality achieved by an accumulation of the /l/, /kl/, /sl/ and /l/ sounds, highlighted by the neologism *schloop*.

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<sup>3</sup> Underlining will be used in examples in an attempt to reflect graphically the density of stylistic features.

<sup>4</sup> The word *curiosity* is consistently misspelt *curtiosity* in the story, which is not commented on in notes to the critical edition (KIPLING 1998: 225-226). Comments can be found on the Internet (“Stack Exchange English Language and Usage”, KINNEAR 2016), suggesting that this may be an imitation of a presumed African or Indian narrator's pronunciation, or an imitation of a child's mispronunciation (in the same story *dretful* appears instead of *dreadful*). However, as these are isolated cases, it does not seem very likely that the author intended to create such voices, especially a child's voice, contrary to the convention assumed in the whole collection, only in this story. Perhaps he intended to make the words more noticeable to suggest an extraordinary intensity of the phenomena referred to.

Ex. 2

*In the High and Far-Off Times the Elephant, O Best Beloved, had no trunk. He had only a blackish, bulgy nose, as big as a boot, that he could wriggle about from side to side; but he couldn't pick up things with it. But there was one Elephant--a new Elephant--an Elephant's Child--who was full of 'satiabile curtiosity, and that means he asked ever so many questions. And he lived in Africa, and he filled all Africa with his 'satiabile curtiosities. He asked his tall aunt, the Ostrich, why her tail-feathers grew just so, and his tall aunt the Ostrich spanked him with her hard, hard claw. He asked his tall uncle, the Giraffe, what made his skin spotty, and his tall uncle, the Giraffe, spanked him with his hard, hard hoof. And still he was full of 'satiabile curtiosity! (KIPLING 1998: 47)*

Ex. 3

*[...] to the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees [...] (Kipling 1998: 48, 49, 50) [...] he schlooped up a schloop of mud from the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo, and slapped it on his head, where it made a cool schloopy-sloshy mud-cap all trickly behind his ears. (KIPLING 1998: 55)*

Extract 4, from the *Leopard* story, features contracted forms of the words *exclusively* (which also serves alliteration) and *remember*, increasingly complex hyphenated colour combinations, word repetitions, including the exotic word *velt*, unconventional superlative degree of adjectives and an unexpected resultative use of the verb *surprise*.

Ex. 4

*In the days when everybody started fair, Best Beloved, the Leopard lived in a place called the High Veldt. Member it wasn't the Low Veldt, or the Bush Veldt, or the Sour Veldt, but the 'sclusively bare, hot, shiny High Veldt, where there was sand and sandy-coloured rock and 'sclusively tufts of sandy-yellowish grass. The Giraffe and the Zebra and the Eland and the Koodoo and the Hartebeest lived there; and they were 'sclusively sandy-yellow-brownish all over; but the Leopard, he was the 'sclusivest sandiest-yellowish-brownest of them all – a greyish-yellowish catty-shaped kind of beast, and he matched the 'sclusively yellowish-greyish-brownish colour of the High Veldt to one hair. This was very bad for the Giraffe and the Zebra and the rest of them; for he would lie down by a 'sclusively yellowish-greyish-brownish stone or clump of grass, and when the Giraffe or the Zebra or the Eland or the Koodoo or the Bush-Buck or the Bonte-Buck came by he would surprise them out of their jumpsome lives. He would indeed! (KIPLING 1998: 33)*

Finally, extract 5, from the very well-known story about “The Cat that Walked by Himself”, shows the multiplication of near synonyms, some alliterated, as well as the repeated structure, and the repeated word *wild*, which results in an abundance of alliteration.

Ex. 5

*Hear and attend and listen; for this befell and behappened and became and was, O my Best Beloved, when the Tame animals were wild. [...] they walked in the Wet Wild Woods by their wild lones. But the wildest of all the wild animals was the Cat. He walked by himself, and all places were alike to him.* (KIPLING 1998: 149)

The style of JSS is indivisible from the overall concept of the book. Adamczyk-Garbowska notes that it makes words acquire new senses by combining them with other words (cf. 1988: 117). Its functions, important for both young and adult audience, are to fascinate recipients and keep their attention by the unusual sound effects combined with exoticism, to create the feeling of mystery, to amuse and activate imagination by showing new linguistic possibilities, to evoke the tradition of orality. Such a style, with sound effects being crucial, certainly presents a translator with challenges close to those encountered in translating rhymed metrical poetry. Jakobson claims that poetry can only be rendered into another language by “creative transposition” since:

*[i]n poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. Syntactic and morphological categories, roots, and affixes, phonemes and their components (distinctive features)—in short, any constituents of the verbal code – are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous signification. Phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship.* (JAKOBSON 2004: 118)

This diagnosis can also be applied to JSS: rendering its special sound organisation resulting in humour, mystery and fascination requires “creative transposition”, often sacrificing the semantics to create a similar effect – this regards especially alliteration and rhymes. Predictably, problems arise from differences between the two languages in question: in the case of translating into Polish for instance, one of them is that Kipling often based rhythm on one-syllable words, while Polish abounds in multi-syllable words, with one syllable ones being much less numerous (cf. ADAMCZYK-GARBOWSKA 1988: 117), forcing the translator to use resources offered by the target language to create rhythm in a modified way. Another factor that influences translators’ approach in such cases is the aforementioned attitude to unconventional styles, in children’s literature strongly correlated with the target culture’s literary conventions as well as views on the acceptability and usefulness of unusual stylistic traits in texts for young audiences.

## Polish renditions of *Just So Stories* before the 2018 retranslation – a historical overview

### *Two major translations*<sup>5</sup>

Turning now to the Polish renditions preceding the 2018 retranslation, let us start with the two major lines of publication before World War II (henceforth: WWII). The first Polish version of the collection appeared in 1903 in Warsaw, issued by the prominent publishing house Gebethner, under the title *Takie sobie historyjki* [Unassuming little stories], translated by Maria Krzczowska,<sup>6</sup> without the verses or the *Alphabet* story (henceforth T1). Its second edition appeared in Cracow in 1904, and the volume was reprinted in 1919 with the author's illustrations. Additionally, several of the stories were published individually as small booklets.

In 1904, another Warsaw publisher, M. Arct, issued a volume with seven of the stories (*Cat, Kangaroo, Elephant, Whale, Rhinoceros, Leopard, Letter*; the title page indicated that it was a selection from Kipling's book), entitled *Takie sobie bajeczki* [Unassuming little tales], translated by Stanisław Wyrzykowski, without the verses, illustrated by Polish artists. Some of the stories from this translation were also published as separate booklets. The 1916 and 1922 editions of this selection featured some original pictures by Kipling and some added ones. In the 1920s, the publisher issued several times a two-volume edition of Wyrzykowski's translations (henceforth T2), volume 1 covering the previously translated seven stories and volume 2 the remaining five ones (the latest available copies are the 1931 imprint). Those editions included the author's pictures with the commentaries, but no verses.

After WWII, which had a crashing impact on the Polish book market, there is record of T1 being reprinted once, in 1945 (in Cracow, by S. Kamiński). After 1948, all the private publishing houses that managed to resurrect after the war were closed, and the publishing business became strictly controlled by the communist state (cf. BORODO 2006: 171-174; LOOBY 2015: 15-25). Until 1953, there was a ban on the publication of most English-language authors, and after the political thaw of the 1950s, a new chapter began in the Polish history of *JSS*, which can be called a "patchwork" phase. In 1955, *Nasza Księgarnia*, a publisher specialising in children's books<sup>7</sup>, issued an edition combining seven stories from T1 with five from T2, entitled *Takie sobie bajeczki*, including

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<sup>5</sup> This section is based on data from the catalogue of the Polish National Library (<https://www.bn.org.pl/>), the digital archive Polona (<https://polona.pl/>) and three bibliographies of children's literature in Polish: Grefkowicz (cf. 2005: 170-171), Krassowska & Grefkowicz (cf. 1995: 210-211), Łasiewicka & Neubert (cf. 1971: 79).

<sup>6</sup> This was a pen-name, in post-WWII editions sometimes misspelt Krzczowska or Krzczowska. Her real name was Maria Kleinman (1874-1953); some of her translations were published under her married name Maria Feldmanowa.

<sup>7</sup> In communist Poland, with the publishing business controlled by the state, specialisations of publishing houses were quite strictly obeyed (cf. FORDOŃSKI 2000: 133), thus the very fact of a book

the author's illustrations with picture captions from T2, and adding verses translated by Hanna Januszewska (1905-1980), a well-known author of books for children. This patchwork has been reissued seven times until 2000; it was also the basis for an audio-book released in 1988 by the Polish Association of the Blind, so it has become a standard version shaping the perception of the book for post-war Polish readers. No library record can be found of a reprint of either T1 or T2 in full after 1945.<sup>8</sup>

### **Two minor cases**

Even though it is definitely T1 and T2 that have shaped the image of *JSS* in Polish, it may be worth mentioning two other cases, which I call minor, since they regard only selected stories and certainly had no significant impact on the reception of the original, but may contribute to the argument about a correlation of status with the translation strategy.

The first case is a 1921 publication containing four stories (*Butterfly, Cat, Rhinoceros* and *Elephant*) in a bilingual edition intended specifically as a language-learning aid (henceforth T3). The publisher's name suggests a language school or an educational association aiming at the promotion of foreign language learning. The peritext<sup>9</sup> reveals that the book was part of a larger project: on the title page above the title in both languages (*Just so stories / Takie sobie opowiadania*) we find the heading: "Foreign languages. European literature works together with their literal translations. The English series vol. 1",<sup>10</sup> while at the end of the book there is a list of titles already published or being prepared in the French and English series, all of them works of famous authors. An interesting feature of this publication is that it reveals overtly the crucial impact of the translation purpose and commission on the translation method, exactly as predicted by the skopos theory (cf. VERMEER 2000). The peritext includes a short preface explaining the objective of the publication, which was to provide pleasant language practice facilitating the acquisition of a foreign tongue. The literal Polish translation was treated instrumentally, as evident from the following comment: "Our translation, aimed only at helping to understand the original, had to be as literal as possible, which made it remote from a purely literary translation" (KIPLING 1921: 3). A similar note appears under the aforementioned list of titles at the end of the volume, stressing that the rendition retains the foreign word order, which does not favour the correctness of

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being published by Nasza Księgarnia signifies that it was considered as intended for young children (there was another publisher specialising in books for teenagers).

<sup>8</sup> T2 in full, with modernised spelling, some corrections, and numerous notes for young readers concerning culture-specific items or less frequently used/dated vocabulary, has recently appeared on the internet website Wolne Lektury [Free Readings], which offers well-known titles, especially school reading, free of charge, often relying on texts that are no longer protected by copyright (<https://wolnelektury.pl/katalog/lektura/kipling-takie-sobie-bajeczki/>). It was also issued as an e-book in 2022 (<https://miastoksiazek.pl/ebook/takie-sobie-bajeczki/>).

<sup>9</sup> The term is used after Genette (1991: 263) to label elements surrounding the main text in the space of the same volume, e.g. prefaces, notes on covers, or footnotes.

<sup>10</sup> Throughout the present paper peritexts are provided in my translation from Polish into English.

the Polish language use. Thus, the connection between the highly pragmatic purpose and the method of translation is expounded and the non-literary quality of the target text is repeatedly highlighted for the user. The non-literary character of the translation, making it a low-status text, may be a reason for which the names of the translator(s) and/or editor(s) who prepared the publication are not mentioned.

The book does not include the verses or the illustrations, which may be connected with production costs, and/or the grammar-translation method of language learning and teaching, which visibly underlies the publication and which favours using prose, and/or the targeted addressee. The child addressee and the oral aspect are completely erased, which is evident both in the very idea of the publication intended to be studied silently and in the short note about Kipling, which states that his clear, expressive and powerful language creates a vision of the world that appeals to both teenagers and adults (cf. KIPLING 1921: 5). Those two groups were certainly envisaged as the addressees, given the overall concept of the publication, as those were most likely to learn English by self-study reading.

The other minor case is the publication of three picture books with the *Whale*, *Camel and Butterfly* stories, issued in 1992 by the publishing house Siedmioróg, specialising in children's literature (KIPLING/PIEŃKIEWICZ 1992 a, b, c). All three stories were translated by Jowita Pieńkiewicz (henceforth T4), but each is accompanied by pictures drawn by a different Polish artist. There are illustrations on each page, taking most of its space, with the text divided into small portions corresponding to them. This, and other features of the graphic layout (e.g. the use of fonts mimicking children's handwriting on title pages) indicate that the books were intended to be read aloud to very young children. The poems are not included.

The date of publication, 1992, marks a very dynamic period, when the Polish market saw the emergence of a plethora of private publishers after the 1989 political and economic transformation which included the abolition of censorship and state control over publishing (cf. FORDOŃSKI 2000: 136). Unlike many publishing houses founded at that time, Siedmioróg, which started operating in 1990, has succeeded to stay on the market until today. However, the historical context of an unstable, highly competitive market situation (cf. FORDOŃSKI 2000: 136-138) may explain why only three stories were published – it may be supposed that the project was discontinued due to some financial problems or commercial considerations.

### ***The significance of publication history***

I consider the publication history of the Polish translations of *JSS* interesting and indicative, as testifying to the relatively low status of the book on the Polish market. T1 and T2 show that the collection was for a long time treated only as a book for children, its integrity as a literary work largely disregarded due to the low status of children's literature translations in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. The production of the patchwork version in the 1950s instead of commissioning a new translation of the whole collection (even though the late 1950s saw some interesting retranslations of English-language classics of the literature for the young, e.g. of works by Lewis Carroll, Mark

Twain, R. L. Stevenson or J. M. Barrie, marking a gradually changing approach to translating that genre; cf. SZYMAŃSKA 2009: 516, 520; 2013: 118-119) also suggests that the book had a rather low status in the system. Its interpretation as a pleasant but not particularly significant volume for small children was reflected in the titles chosen by translators 1 and 2. Both major variants of the title contain diminutive forms *Takie sobie historyjki/bajeczki* [Such unassuming little-stories/little-tales], which was an expected and conventional stylistic trait in older Polish translations of children's literature (ADAMCZYK-GARBOWSKA 1988: 152), but which in turn must have reinforced the conventional image of the book as directed only to children. It is also worth noting that translators 1 and 2 in all probability did not know the origin and significance of the original title, as Kipling's explanation was not included in the book's editions at that time (cf. section The original above), and hence misinterpreted it, producing mistranslations (cf. HEJWOWSKI 2015: 131, 189).

Even though T3 is of marginal importance, it may be worth noting that its title *Takie sobie opowiadania* [Such unassuming stories] does not feature a diminutive – the word *opowiadanie* corresponds to 'a story/narrative' and is also used in literary studies to signify 'a short story'. This tallies with the above identified adult and teenage addressees, differing from the projected recipients of T1 and T2. T4, on the other hand, decisively follows the traditional image of children's books; one of the titles, that of the *Butterfly* story, features the diminutive word *nóżka* 'little foot'. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the producers of T3 intended to assign high status to the original foreign literary works they chose for their series in order to encourage language learners to use them, as is evident from describing their authors as "masters of literature" in the peritext. The status of the very translation, however, as a non-literary one, is visibly low, which in this case is not connected with the child addressee of the original but with the designated pragmatic, language-learning purpose of the target text.

Another important aspect of the publication history is that T 1 and the first part of T2 appeared very soon after the publication of the original,<sup>11</sup> long before it became a classic. The status of the original at that time was naturally much different from what we witness today. Secondly, T1 and the first part of T2 were published in an era when children's literature was treated in Poland primarily as educational and pedagogical, and also as an instrument of preserving the Polish language: it has to be remembered that Poland was partitioned and occupied by foreign powers at that time, regaining its independence only in 1918. Therefore, the literary form of children's books was considered as a tool of reinforcing the native tongue, and in translation, the individual style of the author was often seen as less important than domestic conventions (ADAMCZYK-GARBOWSKA 1988: 147-149). As was indicated in the introductory section above, the domesticating approach to style, although no longer conditioned by the same factor, is still visible in the practice of translating for children today.

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<sup>11</sup> As recounted by Dillingham (2020: 483-485), the book was an instant success, receiving many enthusiastic reviews. This might explain why it found its way to the Polish market so quickly.

Finally, the publication history, especially the fact of issuing selections, demonstrates that the very form of a tale collection makes *JSS* particularly susceptible to translators' and publishers' disregarding its integrality as a literary work in translation due to different publication purposes and market considerations. This is also evident from the varying treatment of the original pictures and poems; the fact that the 1920s editions of T2, unlike the earlier ones, included the original pictures with commentaries suggests that the publisher assumed a more serious approach to *JSS* over time. As is pointed out by Shavit (cf. 1981: 174-175, 2006: 33-37) manipulating text integrality used to be a norm in the translation of children's books, licensed by their low status in literary polysystems, and this phenomenon is illustrated quite conspicuously in this case.

### **Rendition of style in T1, T2, T3 and T4**

#### ***The major translations***

Let us turn now to the issue of style in the translations introduced in the preceding sections. Generally, in T1 the style was partly neutralised; only repetitions are systematically rendered, and even those are sometimes made more conventional. Translation 2 is more interesting in terms of reflecting the original style and through it the atmosphere of the stories, in particular it preserves the rhymes of the source text. It is worth noting that since T2 was reissued several times before WWII (cf. section Two major translations above) Wyrzykowski had a chance to modify his output, as is confirmed by Adamczyk-Garbowska, who compared different editions of his translation (cf. 1988: 121). In preparing the editions from the late 1920s he might also have been influenced by the works of outstanding Polish poets, Julian Tuwim and Jan Brzechwa, famous for experimenting with language in their poetry for children, who started their careers in the early 1920s.

Both translators reduced exoticism in a number of cases (e.g. in T1 *crab* becomes *rak* 'crayfish' and in T2 *High Veldt* becomes just *Wyżyna* 'upland', a completely domestic concept). This was certainly determined by strong domesticating tendencies in translating for children in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Neither T1 nor T2 attempts to render alliteration in any systematic way, which is not surprising either, since this stylistic device, especially in prose, is alien to the Polish tradition (ADAMCZYK-GARBOWSKA 1988: 108). Alliteration as a literary device started to be appreciated by translators and writers only quite recently (cf. e.g. BORODO 2017: 149, 153; SZYMAŃSKA 2016a: 404).

To illustrate tendencies in the translators' treatment of style, let us consider samples from T1 and T2. Ex. 6, for instance, shows that in T1 the multiplication of near synonyms is reduced, and there are additions which weaken the suspense (e.g. the concise cataphoric "this" is expanded to "what I want to tell you"). The onomatopoeic fragment in ex. 7 demonstrates that T1 is semantically very close to the original, the multitude of adjectives is preserved, but there is no attempt at achieving any unusual sound effect.

Ex. 6

*Hear and attend and listen; for this befell and behappened and became and was, O my Best Beloved, when the Tame animals were wild. (KIPLING 1998: 149)*

T1: *Słuchaj, kochanie, i dobrze uważaj, bo to co ci chcę opowiedzieć, działo się przed bardzo dawnymi laty, kiedy zwierzęta obecnie oswojone żyły jeszcze w stanie dzikim* [Listen, darling, and pay close attention, because what I want to tell you took place very long years ago, when the animals that are tame nowadays still lived as wild ones] (KIPLING/KRZECZOWSKA & WYRZYKOWSKI 2000: 135)

Ex. 7

*[...] he schlooped up a schloop of mud from the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo, and slapped it on his head, where it made a cool schloopy-sloshy mud-cap all trickly behind his ears. (KIPLING 1998: 55)*

T1: *[...] zanurzyło trąbę w wielkiej, szarozielonej, mętnej rzece Limpopo, a wydobywszy z niej sporą warstwę mułu, przyłożyło ją sobie na głowę – taką chłodną, miękką, przyjemną czapkę z mułu, który ociekał aż na uszy słoniątka. [put its trunk in the huge, greygreen murky Limpopo river, and having drawn from it a sizeable layer of mud, put it on its head – such a cool, soft, pleasant cap of mud that dripped on the elephant’s ears] (KIPLING/KRZECZOWSKA & WYRZYKOWSKI 2000: 55)*

T1 retains structural parallelisms and word repetitions to some extent. In ex. 8 (corresponding to the ST ex. 2) parallelisms of sentence structure are kept, but phrases with two subsequent identical adjectives are made more conventional by adding *bardzo* ‘very’ between them; *hard* is rendered by two different adjectives, *ostrzy* ‘sharp’ and *twardy* ‘tough’, which conventionally collocate with, respectively, *szpony* ‘claws’ and *kopyto* ‘hoof’. Also, the verb *spank* is replaced by a variety of verbs, more conventionally associated with what animals do, e.g. *kopać* ‘kick’, which is a reflection of a strong stylistic convention that dictates the avoidance of lexical repetition in Polish. For the same reason, *why* is rendered by two synonymous options, *dlaczego* and *czemu*. The translator also uses both orders available in Polish for noun phrases, Adjective + Noun and Noun + Adjective, for the key phrase ‘*satiabile curiosity*, again introducing variety instead of a fixed pattern. The unusual contracted form (‘*satiabile* instead of *insatiabile*) is not rendered – that would be excluded by the pedagogical approach to writings for the young at that time. A predictable adaptation was introduced, dictated by the target language system: aunt Ostrich was turned into *wuj* ‘uncle’ and uncle Giraffe into *ciotka* ‘aunt’, as the Polish word *struś* ‘ostrich’ is of the masculine grammatical gender, while *żyrafa* ‘giraffe’ – of the feminine.

Ex. 8

T1: *W Dawnych, bardzo Dawnych Czasach, moje Kochanie, Słoń wcale nie miał trąby. Miał tylko czarniawy, zakrzywiony nos wielkości buta, którym mógł wprawdzie poruszać na wszystkie strony, ale nie mógł nim nic podnosić. Ale żył podówczas jeden Słoń – raczej*

Słoniątko o nieposkromionej ciekawości, to znaczy, że Słoniątko to ustawicznie zadawało przeróżne pytania. Słoniątko to żyło w Afryce i całą Afrykę niepokoiło swoją nieposkromioną ciekawością. Swego wielkiego wuja Strusia zapytało, dlaczego ma takie długie pióra w ogonie, a jego wielki wuj Struś szarpnął je ostrymi, bardzo ostrymi szponami. Swoją wielką ciotkę Żyrafę zapytało, czemu ma skórę centkowaną, a wielka ciotka Żyrafa kopnęła je twardym, bardzo twardym kopytem. Mimo to Słoniątko okazywało ciągle ciekawość nieposkromioną. (KIPLING/KRZECZOWSKA & WYŻYKOWSKI 2000: 46)

Turning to T2, ex. 9 (corresponding to ST ex. 1 above), features an appealing example of preserving rhymes (which, understandably, leads to changing the semantics of some of the lexical items, some of which in fact do not mean fish or marine creatures):

Ex. 9

T2: Istniał w morzu dawnymi laty... Wieloryb, który jadał ryby. Jadał klenie i lipienie, kraby i żaby, głowacze i sandacze, jesiotry i ich kumotry, szczupaki, mięczaki oraz inne nieboraki. Wszystkie ryby, jakie tylko znajdowały się w morzu, pożerał swą paszczą – chap, i już! W końcu w całym morzu pozostała tylko jedna mała rybka. Była to Płotka, co, pływając trzymała się nieco za prawym uchem Wieloryba, żeby nie stało się jej nic złego. I zdarzyło się, że Wieloryb stanął dęba na swym ogonie i odezwał się: - Jestem głodny. Mała zaś Płotka rzekła swym cichym głosikiem, jakim zwykły mówić płotki: - Szlachetny i dostojny Wielorybie, czyś kosztował kiedy Człowieka? (KIPLING/KRZECZOWSKA & WYŻYKOWSKI 2000: 46)

Additionally, translating *fish* as *płotka* 'roach' may be an attempt at playing with two meanings, as this word is also used metaphorically in the sense of 'small fry'. The phrase "cichym głosikiem, jakim zwykły mówić płotki" [in a soft little voice which roaches usually use] is probably intended to introduce an element of repetition and sound parallelisms (the prominent sound sequences /gw/ and /pw/) compensating for the effect of "small 'Stute Fish said in a small 'stute voice". One of the key phrases repeatedly used in the *Whale* story, "man of infinite resource and sagacity", is rendered in T2 as "człowiek niesłychanej pomysłowości i obrotności" [a man of unheard-of inventiveness and resourcefulness]. Here, the translator used two de-adjectival nouns with the same suffix, which creates a noticeable additional sound effect. However, differentiating *whale* from *cetacean* was not attempted.

Ex. 10

T2: Hej, posłuchaj, a uważaj pilnie, bo to, moje najmilsze kochanie, było, stało się i wydarzyło w owe czasy, kiedy swojskie zwierzęta żyły jeszcze dziko [Hey, listen, and attend closely, because this, my dearest love, was, took place and happened in those times when tame animals were still living wild] (KIPLING/WYŻYKOWSKI 1928a: 5)

Comparing ex. 10 with the corresponding fragment from T1 in ex. 6 reveals that in T2 the multiplication of near synonyms is visible and suspense building is preserved, so the effect is much closer to the intended orality than in T1. Generally, in T2 the special “patterns” of Kipling’s style are more frequently rendered or compensated for than in T1.

### *The minor cases*

As has been mentioned, the two minor translations have certainly not contributed to the shaping of the book’s image on the Polish market, but it is worth exploring briefly how they rendered its style.

T3 may be considered as an interesting example of a rendition stylistically fully consistent with the idea and objective of its publication outlined above. As the aim of the translation is to assist readers’ English language acquisition, the translation features syntactic calques from English and even introduces in brackets first dictionary equivalents of the words featuring in the original rendered by other equivalents to make the text understandable, or alternatives to the words used in the Polish version. For instance, in the fragment corresponding to ST ex. 2 we find phrases like “w dawnych (wysokich) i oddalonych czasach” [in old (high) and far-away times] or “zapytywał swego wysokiego wujaszka (stryjaszka) żyrafę” [asked his tall maternal-uncle (paternal-uncle) giraffe] (KIPLING 1921: 35). Needless to say, the words for aunt and uncle are not switched according to the grammatical gender of the animal names, nor are any sound effects attempted. Repetitions of lexical items and sentence structures are meticulously rendered in the Polish text, and upon reflection, this aspect of Kipling’s style might have been considered a particularly useful quality of the stories in foreign language learning as facilitating the memorisation of vocabulary and providing repeated exposure to the same syntactic patterns.

As T4 only comprises three stories, the material for analysing the rendition of style is limited. Repetitions are usually preserved, which suggests that the translator prioritised their importance for the ST style over the TL convention of avoiding them. There are also signals of the translator being careful about the sound effects, which would be in line with the concept of picture books to be read aloud to children. For instance, in the *Whale* story, in the fragment corresponding to ex. 1 and 9, the names of creatures devoured by the Whale are rhymed, while the phrase “small 'Stute Fish said in a small 'stute voice” is translated as “*Sprytna Szprotka powiedziała sprytnym głosikiem*” [the smart sprat said in a smart little-voice] (KIPLING/PIEŃKIEWICZ 1992a: unpag), *sprytny głosik* ‘smart little-voice’ being an unusual but possible collocation, and the word *szprotka* ‘sprat’ creating a noticeable near-alliteration of the /sp/ and /šp/ consonantal clusters. In the same story there is a sequence of rhymed pairs of one-syllable verbs, creating a strong rhythmical pattern:

Ex. 11

[...] *he stumped and he jumped and he thumped and he bumped, and he pranced and he danced, and he banged and he clanged, and he hit and he bit, and he leaped and he*

*creeped, and he prowled and he howled, and he hopped and he dropped, and he cried and he sighed, and he crawled and he bawled, and he stepped and he lepped, and he danced hornpipes where he shouldn't, [...]*(KIPLING 1998: 5)

T4: [...] zaczął tupać i skakać i ryczeć i płakać i szturchać i kopsać i szczypać i hopsać i czołgać się i kichać i turlać się i wzdychać i piszczeć i ryczeć, koziołkować i kwiczeć i tańczyć zbójnickiego choć nie było miejsca do tego [...]. (KIPLING/PIENKIEWICZ 1992a: unpag)

The sequence from T4 is visibly shorter, the rhyming pattern, as indicated by underlining, is less dense and the rhythm is not fully consistent: most of the verbs are two-syllable, but there are also longer ones. Difficulties in translating such rhythmical rhymed fragments can be attributed to the fact that Polish does not offer many one-syllable verbs and due to the predominantly penultimate-syllable word stress feminine rhymes are more common, working more naturally than masculine rhymes, contrary to English.<sup>12</sup> Generally, the three stories included in T4 seem to have made quite a promising start as regards the rendition of Kipling's style and may be considered as converging with the pattern of increasing attention paid to the book's stylistic aspect evidenced by the chronological sequence of Polish literary translations of JSS.

## The 2018 translation

### *The context and the peritext*

The newest translation (henceforth T5) was published in 2018 by the small publishing house Czuły Barbarzyńca, specialising in quality literature, and the whole project is visibly highly ambitious. The title *Bajki, które trzeba opowiadać właśnie tak* [Stories that have to be told just so], though lacking conciseness and thus not particularly catchy, for the first time in the history of Polish literary translations of JSS reflects the meaning of the original title, replacing the established mistranslated one. Importantly, it overtly refers to the orality of the stories and does not include a diminutive. The word *bajka* is often used in everyday language as an umbrella term for films, books and goodnight

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<sup>12</sup> This, however, does not preclude a fuller rendition of the original style if the translator is sensitive to opportunities afforded by the TL, as evidenced by T2, which provides a sequence slightly shorter than the original, but involving perfectly rhyming and very rhythmical pairs of mostly two-syllable verbal expressions: “psocić i grzmocić, brykać i fikać, hulać i się kulać, człapać i drapać, smagać i kozły magać, drygać i śmigać, hukać i fukać, rwać i żgać, płasać i kąsać, krzyczeć i ryczeć; hasając na nutę swawolną gdzie wcale hasać nie wolno” (KIPLING/WYRZYKOWSKI 1928b: 71, 74), the final feat being the addition of a rhyme in the phrase following the semicolon, backtranslating as [dancing wildly to a frivolous tune where dancing is not allowed at all]. In the 2000 edition of the patchwork version (KIPLING/KRZECZOWSKA & WYRZYKOWSKI 2000: 10-11) some verbs in this fragment of T2 were substituted with more common ones and some were omitted, undoubtedly on account of them being dated or infrequently used, and thus difficult to young readers, which has made the fragment less striking.

stories for children, but in literary terminology it means ‘fable’, thus the translator capitalises on its ambiguity, as the author in the case in the original title.

The peritext located on the back cover of the beautifully designed hardback edition announces the aim of offering readers a completely new quality:

*The first full Polish edition of one of the most important children’s classics in a new translation by Hanna Pustuła-Lewicka. Published in 1902, the children’s story collection Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) – in former Polish translations known as Takie sobie bajeczki – is a fantastic bestiary, in which the author explains the world’s complexities to the small reader. Due to its novel form, neologisms, language experiments and subtle humour, the collection became a literary attraction also to adult English-language readers. Kipling’s tales have been jocularly described as texts preparing readers for the later linguistic extravagances of Joyce. The new translation, faithful to the original, accompanied with critical apparatus and the author’s illustrations which are intricately integrated with the text, offers a deeper and multi-faceted appreciation of this work’s artistry.*

This description expounds the motives behind the retranslation: restoring the integrality of the book and the double addressee in the Polish version, doing full justice to its stylistic refinement, thus perhaps also influencing its image for the literary-conscious reader, and at the same time offering both young and adult recipients a linguistically innovative text and therefore a unique reading experience.

T5 is based on the 2009 Oxford University Press critical edition, which features extensive peritexts, also translated into Polish. Thus, in addition to the stories, the poems, the original illustrations and commentaries to illustrations, for the first time all translated by the same translator, the reader receives notes to each story (explaining allusions and inspirations, and sometimes pointing to stylistic features, e.g. puns), the author’s preface that was already mentioned, an introduction to the critical edition (by Lisa Lewis) detailing the history of the book and its literary significance, a preface to the critical edition (by the editor Andrew Rutherford) exploring Kipling’s writings against the historical background and their relevance for modern readers, a timeline of Kipling’s life and work, and two additional stories, “A Tabu Tale”, and “Ham and the Porcupine”, which are not included in standard editions. This aspect of the Polish publication caters very much for the interests of adult recipients, reflects the current high status of the book as a classic in the source culture, and is aimed at raising the book’s status on the Polish market.

T5 is an example of scholarly retranslations of children’s classics. In discussing this type of retranslation Lathey (cf. 2006: 13-15) highlights dilemmas regarding the degree of domestication in the cultural area faced by translators trying to cater simultaneously for the needs of different types of audiences: scholars, average adult readers and children. She points out that such a situation may result in a lack of consistency in using the domesticating strategy, which may disrupt the reception of the work for any of the

presumed audiences, or favour one of them. Since the translation analysed in this section overtly declares its dual address in the peritext, it is worth mentioning that it succeeds in avoiding this kind of inconsistency or imbalance between the adult and the young audience opting for the preservation of both the exotic and the British elements of the original, which are explained in the peritext, so the explanations can be used if needed, or the unknown elements can be treated, especially by children, as part of the intriguing “magic”<sup>13</sup> of the stories.

### ***The rendition of style***

As to style, it must be stressed that Pustuła-Lewicka is very conscious of the challenge and makes her presence and approach visible by adding footnotes in several places in the peritext, where the stylistic quality of the original is discussed. For example, in connection with neologisms, she comments in a footnote that they are often compensated for by creating neologisms elsewhere (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 234). In another footnote she points out that in the sequence quoted in ex. 11 the rhythm achieved in the original by one-syllable words is reflected by two-syllable ones in her translation (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 234). This is certainly a very modern approach, counteracting the traditional “invisibility” of the translator. Rather surprisingly considering the richness of the peritexts, and quite unfortunately from a translation analyst’s perspective, she did not write a translator’s note; no interviews concerning this translation could be found on the Internet, either.

Rendering style was certainly a priority for Pustuła-Lewicka; also her inventiveness as a translator is admirable, as is the introduction of some unconventional features and the use of compensation – especially to introduce alliteration – which signals a deeply conscious and holistic approach to the text. The following examples will demonstrate the density of reproduced features of style.

Ex. 12

T5: *Dawno, dawno temu, o Najukochańsza, żył sobie w morzu Wieloryb, który zjadał ryby. Zjadał płocie i trocie, makrele i sardele, płotki i szprotki, i dorsze, bo nie gorsze, i śledzie po obiedzie i kręcące się, wiercące się, wijące się węgorze – o każdej porze. Wszystkie ryby, jakie tylko mógł znaleźć w morzu, zjadał swoją paszczą – właśnie tak! Aż w końcu w całym morzu została tylko jedna mała rybka, a była to mała Sprytna Rybka, która pływała tuż za prawym uchem Wieloryba, żeby nie mógł jej zjeść. Wtedy Wieloryb stanął na ogonie i powiedział: - Jestem głodny. A mała Sprytna Rybka zapytała cieniutkim sprytnym głosikiem: - O szlachetny i wspaniałomyślny Waleniu, czy kosztowałeś kiedyś Człowieka?* (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 7)

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<sup>13</sup> “Magic” and related words, as well the phrase “this is magic”, appear numerous times throughout the book. Dillingham points out that the exploration of the notion of “good magic” is a particularly important aspect of the book’s appeal to children (cf. 2020: 488-492).

Ex. 12, corresponding to ex. 1 and 9, shows that as in T2 and T4, the names of creatures gobbled by the Whale are rhymed. However, Pustuła-Lewicka extends the sequence by creating phrases characteristic of children's poetry just for the sake of the rhyme, e.g. "i dorsze, bo nie gorsze, i śledzie po obiedzie" [and cods 'cause they are not worse, and herrings after dinner]. Unlike translators 2 and 4, she finds a way to reflect the sound effect of "really truly twirly-whirly eel" by creating the partly alliterated sequence of adjectival participles with the same ending "kręcące się, wiercące się, wijące się węgorki" [whirling, wriggling, writhing eels]. Alliteration in the name of the little Fish is not attempted, unlike in T4, on the other hand in contrast to her predecessors, Pustuła-Lewicka preserves the differentiation between "whale" and "cetacean" using the words *wieloryb* 'whale' and *waleń* – a term used for the *Cetacea* group of marine mammals in the biological classification, thus reproducing the original difference in register. "A man of infinite-resource-and-sagacity" is rendered as "mąż przemądry i przebiegły" [a man exceedingly wise and exceedingly skilled]; the translator capitalises on the use of the prefix *prze-*, which when added to adjectives creates the meaning of 'extremely/exceedingly' and on ambiguity, as the adjective *przebiegły*, when not analysed as a prefixed one, means 'cunning'.

Ex. 13

T5: *W dawnych i odległych czasach, o Najukochańsza, słonie nie miały trąb. Miały tylko ruchliwe, niuchliwe nochale, wielkie jak but. Potrafiły kręcić nimi na boki, ale nie mogły niczego nimi podnieść. Był jednak pewien słoń – nowy słoń – Słoniątko – które przepelniała n'nasycona ciekawość. Mieszkało w Afryce i wypełniało całą Afrykę swoją n'nasyconą ciekawością. Pytało swojego wysokiego wuja Strusia, dlaczego pióra w jego ogonie rosną tak jak rosną i Struś dawał mu klapsa twardym, twardym pazurem. Pytało swoją wysoką ciotkę Żyrafę, od czego zrobiły jej się na skórze takie plamy, i jego wysoka ciotka Żyrafa dawała mi klapsa twardym, twardym kopytem. A mimo to wciąż przepelniała je n'nasycona ciekawość.* (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 49)

Ex. 13, corresponding to ex. 2 and 8, shows the creative compensatory approach of Pustuła-Lewicka: in the phrase corresponding to "a blackish, bulgy nose" a touch of alliteration is supplemented with a rhyme: "ruchliwe, niuchliwe nochale" [fidgety sniffy hooters]. Parallelisms and repetitions are fully preserved unlike in T1 (cf. ex. 8), and the translator even enhances the effect using the potential of the TL syntax, rendering the clause "why her tail-feathers grew just so" as "dlaczego pióra w jego ogonie rosną tak jak rosną" [why feathers in his tail grow in the way they grow]. The translator also mimics Kipling's orthographic and semantic play with the word *insatiable* – the Polish equivalent *nienasycona* is spelt *n'nasycona*, which is unconventional and quite daring, as apostrophes are not used in Polish to indicate contraction. It can be argued that this particular idea works mostly on the page, as pronouncing this modification is rather difficult. The unusual spelling of *curtiosity* is not rendered – the translator uses the standard word *ciekawość* 'curiosity'. A possibility that comes to mind in this case

is to multiply the letter A in this word to produce *ciekaaawość*, to indicate a prolonged pronunciation of the vowel, which would suggest that the curiosity is really enormous.

Ex. 14

T4: [...] stanęło na brzegu szerokiej szarozielonej szlamistej rzeki Limpopo, gdzie rosły nieliczne drzewa malaryczne [...] (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 51)

[...] nabrało trąbą wielką paciaję paciajowatego błota z szerokiej szarozielonej szlamistej rzeki Limpopo i zrobiło sobie dla ochłody przed skwarem paciajowatą błotną czapkę, która ściekała mu chłodną strużką za uszami. (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 54)

Ex. 14 features T5's renditions of the highly onomatopoeic ST fragments quoted in ex. 3. The alliteration in the frequently repeated phrase describing the river is rendered successfully, with the use of the sound /ś/, which evokes the impression of swooshing; the phrase "all set about with fever-trees" is changed to "gdzie rosły nieliczne drzewa malaryczne" [where few fever-trees grew] to create an additional rhyme. The effect of the neologism "schloop" is reflected by playing with the derivatives of the informal word *paciaja* '~gunge/pulp'. Another enticing example from the same story is translating "You couldn't have done that with a mere-smear nose" into: "Nie mógłbyś tego zrobić swoim poprzednim plaskatym noskiem" [you couldn't have done it with your previous flat nose] (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 54), where alliteration is used instead of rhyming.<sup>14</sup>

Ex. 15

T4: W dawnych i odległych czasach, o najukochańsza, kiedy wszyscy jeszcze mieli jasną skórę albo jasną sierść, Lampart mieszkał w miejscu zwanym Wysokim Veldem. Pamiętaj, że to nie był Niski Veld ani Leśny Veld, ani Kwaśny Veld, a tylko-i-wyłącznie nagi, gorący, błyszczący Wysoki Veld z piaskiem i oczkami koloru piasku, calusieńki porośnięty kępami piaskowożółtej trawy. Mieszkały tam Żyrafa, Zebra, Eland, Kudu i Bawolec, wszystkie tylko-i-wyłącznie piaskowożółtobrązowe od stóp do głów. Ale naj-tylko-i-wyłącznie piaskowożółtobrązowy z nich wszystkich był Lampart, żółtawobury zwierz w kształcie kota o sierści harmonizującej z tylko-i-wyłącznie żółtobrązowoburawą kolorystyką Wysokiego Veldu. Było to bardzo niekorzystne dla Żyrafy, Zebry i całej reszty, Lampart bowiem zaczął się na nie obok tylko-i-wyłącznie żółtoburobrązowawego kamienia albo kępy trawy, a kiedy przechodziła tamtędy Żyrafa albo Zebra, albo Eland, albo Kudu, albo Buszbok, albo Bontebok, skakał na nie i zaskakiwał je na śmierć. Oj, zaskakiwał! (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 37)

<sup>14</sup> The word *plaskaty* means 'flat' in the Silesian dialect of Polish (<https://www.silling.org/slownik/plaskaty>). For a user of general standard Polish, it may seem to be an amusing neologism related to the onomatopoeic word *plask* 'splash/splat/slap'.

In ex. 15, corresponding to the ST ex. 4, the exotic word *Veld* is transferred and repeated many times, additionally, Polish affords compensatory alliteration in the phrase “Wysoki Veld”, as the letters V and W are both pronounced as /v/. All the highly exotic animal species are preserved, without any attempts to substitute them with ones better known to the target audience. Complex colour adjective combinations are also recreated; it is not common in Polish to combine more than two colour adjectives without a hyphen, while we usually have three here.<sup>15</sup> The play with the spelling of *exclusively* is compensated for with an unusual hyphenated spelling of the emphatic phrase *tylko i wyłącznie* ‘only and exclusively’ (this sort of hyphenating is alien to the Polish convention), “naj-tylko-i-wyłączniej” is an attempt at creating a completely unconventional superlative degree of this phrase. Finally, there is a pun based on the similarity of the verbs *skoczyć* ‘jump’ and *zaskoczyć* ‘surprise’.

Ex. 16

T4: *Posłuchaj uważnie, usłysz i dowiedz się; wydarzyło się to bowiem, wypadło, wydziało się i było, o Najukochańsza, kiedy zwierzęta domowe były jeszcze dzikie. Pies był dziki, Koń był dziki, Krowa była dzika, Owca była dzika i Świania była dzika – tak dzika jak to tylko możliwe i wszystkie chodziły po Przedzikiej Prastarej Puszczy własnymi dzikimi ścieżkami. A najdzikszy ze wszystkich dzikich zwierząt był Kot. Chodził własnymi ścieżkami i wszędzie było mu tak samo dobrze.* (KIPLING/PUSTUŁA-LEWICKA 2018: 139)

In ex. 17, corresponding to the ST ex. 5, T1 ex. 6 and T2 ex. 10, the multiplication of near synonyms is fully reflected, with alliteration in the second group of verbs (“wydziało się” is a neologism coined for the sake of alliteration); syntactic parallelisms and the abundance of the word *wild* (*dzika/dziki* and related forms) are kept; “Wet Wild Woods” is translated as the alliterated phrase “Przedzika Prastara Puszcza” [excessively-wild ancient forest/wilderness], with the adjective “przedzika” showing a very unusual application of the aforementioned prefix *prze-*.

As demonstrated in the examples, in T5 the density of style markers and the degree of experimenting with language greatly exceeds what we find in the previous renditions. Its radical and unconventional use of language in its attempt to recreate the original’s style in the Polish translation provides target recipients with a new quality and a new image of the original.

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<sup>15</sup> The corresponding fragment of T2 includes two- or three-adjective combinations but spelt with hyphens, or sequences of three adjectives spelt separately combined with ‘and’ (e.g. “piaskowy, żółty i brunatny” [sandy, yellow and brown] (KIPLING/WYRZYKOWSKI 1928a: 62), forms which are more conventional than the renditions in T5.

## **Conclusion**

The above analysis has demonstrated a significant difference in the rendition of the unique creative, orality-inspired style of *JSS* between the previous Polish literary translations (leaving aside the non-literary T3) and the newest 2018 retranslation (T5). Particularly revealing is the comparison of T5 with T1 and T2, which shaped the image of this literary work in Poland by providing input for the patchwork version present on the Polish book market from 1955 to 2000. In T1 many unusual patterns and features of Kipling's style were neutralised, and the translator was visibly trying to adapt the style to the Polish stylistic conventions and to the vision of the functions of children's literature characteristic of her time. T2, whose history is more complicated as it was created in parts over more than two decades, renders more of the original's special stylistic features and therefore better reflects the humourous and entertaining quality of the stories, but it also makes the Polish version more conventional than the original in many places. A factor that was definitely at play in both cases was the Polish literary tradition (which conditioned e.g. the disregard of alliteration); another was certainly the translators' judgement of what stylistic experiments adult recipients who pay for books were likely to accept and what style they expected in publications for children (this judgement did not have to be exactly the same, even though the two translators worked in the same era). The status of the ST was also involved, as predicted by the polysystem theory: the above described manipulations of the text integrity in the first two translations, the different treatment of illustrations, omitting commentaries to illustrations, the fact the only selected stories were published in some editions, and finally the production the patchwork version in 1955, which was reissued many times until 2000, testifies to the low status of the book on the Polish market, making adaptations to target culture conventions easier for translators. With the style not fully rendered, T1, T2 and the patchworks version partly blur the orality of the original, although they definitely can be enjoyed while being read aloud. Another factor involved is the addressee: T1, T2 and the patchwork version, were definitely directed at child recipients, as evidenced by the titles featuring diminutive forms, and in the case of the patchwork, even the very publisher. The same is clearly visible in the case of three picture books, labelled as T4, the genre and the graphic layout pointing unmistakably to very young recipients. Therefore, those renditions were certainly subject to expectations and norms concerning the language of children's literature characteristic of their times.

T5 contrasts with T1 and T2 in all those aspects; actually the peritext on the back cover (quoted in section The context and the peritext) suggests that it was intended as polemical to T1 and T2 (known to average contemporary readers from the patchwork version). As was demonstrated in the analysis, the style of the original is rendered very systematically, with the use of compensation if the TL does not allow preserving some features in places exactly corresponding to the original, a particularly novel aspect of T5 being the wide use of alliteration. The translator applied many unusual linguistic features and dared to disregard some Polish conventions, especially the one dictating the avoidance of repetition. Some of her solutions, e.g. playing with contractions, may

be considered controversial, as this orthographic device is alien to the Polish language. For the first time the Polish title reflects the idea of the original title and, converging with the rendition of style, fully highlights the intended oral quality of the stories. One of the factors that opened a way to this stylistically novel and creative translation is the increased status of the ST in its culture. The book is presented to the Polish readers as a classic of English literature and is treated as a classic in the translation itself, as regards both the meticulous rendition of style and the integrality of the book. For the first time on the Polish book market the whole collection, together with poems and commentaries to illustrations, was translated by one translator, which contrasts sharply with the previous selections and the patchwork version. Furthermore, the reader receives an extensive academic apparatus, testifying to the status of *JSS* as an important, valuable and novel work of literature. In correlation with the above issues, T5, as evident from the peritext, tries to restore the book to the Polish market as a double-addressee one, intriguing for adult readers, which also increases its status. According to the polysystem theory, a higher status of the original induces translators to produce careful and meticulous renditions directed at achieving adequacy rather than acceptability, simultaneously licensing the usage of non-domestic literary models, which is witnessed in T5.

As was indicated in the introduction, as regards the stylistic shape of children's books, there have been some signals in the Polish translation practice recently, suggesting increasing focus on the entertaining and imagination-stirring functions as well as a slightly more flexible approach of publishers to the acceptability of marked, unconventional styles in writings for young audiences. The 2018 retranslation of *JSS* may be viewed as one of the examples to substantiate the beginning of such a shift in readers' and publishers' expectations. Further research on similar cases is certainly necessary before any stronger claims can be made.

T5 may also be considered in the context of a new phenomenon on the Polish translation market, namely publishing retractions of children's classics with changed titles, departing from the traditional versions, widely-known for many decades. Notable recent examples of modifying traditional titles are the newest retranslation of L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* cycle (2022-2024), the 2023 retranslation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or the 2022 and 2024 retractions of Ferenc Molnár's *A Pál utcai fiúk*. Changing traditional titles indicates that in contrast to retranslation cases from a decade or two ago, some publishers have become willing to risk such a move and provoke a controversy, probably believing that this will attract buyers and increase sales. A new title is a signal of offering the recipient a new quality, as new versions are usually semantically closer to the original titles than the old ones, which were often adapted, or even mistranslated, as was the case with *JSS*. Proposing a new title is often an occasion to increase the visibility of translators and make their voices conspicuous (cf. ALVSTAD & ASSIS ROSA 2015: 3-7) in prefaces that explain the rationale of the new approach. Even though T5 does not contain the translator's note or preface, her voice is audible in footnotes, and this puts the translation in question among cases indicating a growing visibility of translators in children's literature.

As evident from heated discussions on Internet forums regarding the changed title in the latest retranslation of *Anne of Green Gables* readers' reactions to such decisions made by translators and publishers are varied, sometimes very negative. I have not been able to find any readers' reactions to the 2018 retranslation of *JSS* beyond stars assigned to the book on booksellers' websites (usually five stars), it would, however, be interesting to collect some data on its reception, including the changed title.

Such data might contribute to answering a question that arises from the Polish publication history of *JSS*, namely whether it is possible to explain why this book has "waited" relatively long to be seriously re-approached by a modern translator. Let us note that we are dealing here with a long period of non-retranslation (cf. SVAHN 2024), spanning from the 1920s to 2018. Non-retranslation in the period between 1955 and 1989 can be explained by the standard publishing practice during the communist period in Poland, when retranslations in general were not very frequent and many children's books functioned for four or five decades in slightly revised pre-WWII translations. The three picture books published in 1992 (T4) was probably an attempt at a retranslation, but only a small fraction of the collection was translated, probably due to financial problems. 1989, when free-market economy was reintroduced after the fall of communism, marks the emergence of numerous private publishers and many retranslations of widely known titles for young readers promising quick profit. Especially after 1994, when new copyright regulations were introduced in Poland, strengthening the protection of translators' rights, retranslations of children's classics have become frequent, since paradoxically, it is cheaper and easier to commission a new translation than to purchase the publishing rights of an existing one (cf. MOC 1997: 182-182; FORDOŃSKI 2000: 139) *JSS*, however, has escaped this regularity: the patchwork version was reprinted until 2000, after which there is a gap in publications until 2018. A possible explanation is that the popularity of the title was lowering and publishers did not consider it attractive enough to merit a retranslation or a reprint, therefore researching the book's recognisability among readers could provide some clues. Answering the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph would certainly require wide research into non-retranslation of children's literature in Poland along the lines proposed by Svahn (2024). As this author suggests that the status of the original is a significant factor involved in retranslations vs non-retranslations ( cf. SVAHN 2024: 56), it can be concluded on the basis of the analysis presented above that the high status achieved by the original in its target culture induced filling a publication gap and reintroducing *JSS* to the Polish market as a double-addressee classic deserving a translation of its entirety prepared by a single translator and doing full justice to its literary merits.

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**Gaëtan Regniers**

## Viral Translations Retranslation and Periodicals

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### Abstract

*Re-translations within periodicals have hitherto received limited scholarly attention. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining whether Stemmatology provides a pertinent methodological framework for elucidating the intricate dynamics of rapidly succeeding retranslations. Through a case study focusing on translations of Leo Tolstoy's story "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" ("Bog pravdu vidit da ne skoro skažet") in Dutch newspapers throughout the nineteenth century, we investigate the feasibility of employing Stemmatology in mapping these retranslations. Our analysis demonstrates that juxtaposing variation against chronological sequence enhances comprehension of the underlying dynamics, and that the proposed model aligns with certain established aspects of re-translation.*

*Keywords: retranslation, periodicals, 19<sup>th</sup> century, The Netherlands, Tolstoy*

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Gaëtan C. Regniers

## From Text to Tree

### A Stemmatological Approach to Retranslation

#### Abstract

*This paper investigates fiction retranslations in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch newspapers. Drawing on a dataset of over 2,300 translations of Russian literature published between 1835 and 1970, it identifies 41% as retranslations. These retranslations frequently appeared in different newspapers within days or weeks after the initial publication. Conventional models of retranslation, which focus on sequential temporal progression, fail to explain this rapid spread. To address this gap, the paper employs Stemmatology, a genealogical method originally designed for reconstructing manuscript traditions, to trace kinship relationships among retranslations. Using Leo Tolstoy's story "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" as a case study, it evaluates the method's suitability for analysing retranslations in periodicals. The findings reveal key patterns and provoke broader questions about translation practices within the press.*

#### Introduction

This paper examines retranslations of fiction in 19<sup>th</sup> century newspapers and proposes a methodology to better understand this phenomenon. The dataset<sup>1</sup> used in this paper comprises over 2,300 translations of Russian literature published in Dutch newspapers (1835-1970), 41% of the corpus qualifies as retranslations, in Deane-Cox's (2014: 1) sense as "multiples of one [text] which relate not only to the source text but also to each other." In this case: a translation of a source text of Russian origin that has previously been published as a translation in a Dutch newspaper. In most cases, but not always, these are publications in different newspapers, usually with a limited time difference of a few days or weeks. It seems as if these works of fiction are going viral, to use a modern metaphor. The multiplicity of translations on the one hand and the limited time lapse between them on the other is at odds with the classical paradigm of a retranslation that over time succeeds an older translation (see the discussion in VAN POUCKE 2017: 110-111).

Identifying patterns is the biggest challenge with the translations studied here because a linear relationship between source text and target text(s) cannot be easily determined. To understand the kinship relationships, I turn to Stemmatology. This genealogical method was originally designed to classify and reconstruct manuscripts. The use of phylogenetic trees to trace textual transmission was previously proposed in relation to

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<sup>1</sup> The dataset *Russian Literature in Dutch Newsprint* (RLDN) is a bibliographic collection of translations published in the 19th and 20th centuries. The data are part of an ongoing project and are therefore not yet available via open access.

the reuse of content by newspapers (SMITH & CORDELL & DILLON 2013: 92). I explore whether this method can be instrumental in organising the many retranslations as they appear in periodicals and how we might use this approach to understand the relationships between these translations. Based on this analysis, can we explain the proliferation of retranslations? What does this reveal about the broader status of fiction translations in periodicals? And, more generally, what potential value might Stemmatology offer to research in (re)translation studies?

The structure of this paper is as follows: first, Section 1 situates translations of fiction within the context of newspapers. Section 2 introduces the Lachmann method and critically reviews its compatibility with applications in translation studies. Section 3 presents Leo Tolstoy's story "Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet" ("God Sees the Truth, But Waits"), which is then used in Section 4 to analyse as a case study of retranslations in newspapers. Finally, the conclusion in Section 5 evaluates the analytical capacity of the proposed methodology and identifies challenges for future research.

### **Translations in Newspapers**

Between approximately 1850 and 1950, fiction in the form of serials became a regular feature in periodicals, beginning in France and later spreading to other countries, including the Netherlands. The motivations behind publishing serialised fiction were twofold. For periodicals, it served as an effective way to retain readership; for the public, which was expanding due to rising literacy rates, feuilletons offered an affordable and accessible means to enjoy fiction at a time when books were often still costly and thus exclusive (MIGOZZI 2007: 84; THIESSE 1984: 17-35).

In Dutch newspapers specifically, translated fiction occupied a significant position (KOSTER 2021: 374). The role of translation in periodicals has long remained underexplored in scholarly research (VAN DOORSLAER 2010). Recently, however, scholarship on this topic has been expanding (GUZMÁN 2019; O'CONNOR 2019; FÓLICA & ROIG-SANZ & CARISTIA 2020; REGNIERS 2021). Despite the evident significance of translation in periodicals, the phenomenon of retranslation in this context has yet to be explored.

### **Stemmatology**

#### ***In Search of the Lost Text***

Faced with the fact that no autographs have survived from Greek and Roman classical authors and that we have only later, incomplete and/or mutually divergent manuscripts, philologists in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries developed a methodology to reconstruct the original text of these manuscripts. They started working with the text witnesses, the manuscripts produced over time by scribes that together form a collection of copies and thus bear witness to the original text. Stemmatology is based on the assumption "that each scribe consciously or unconsciously deviates" from the text he is copying (MAAS 1958: 3). This implies that each copy is unique, and furthermore that the text

drifts further and further away from the original through repeated copying and transmission of deviation. The idea is that texts that have “common errors” share a “parent text”. On the basis of these common errors, various text traditions can be traced. In Stemmatology (also known as Textual Criticism or the Lachmann method, after the influential scholar Karl Lachmann, 1793-1851), the ultimate aim is to design a family tree of manuscripts (“*stemma*”), and to climb as far up the family tree as possible to approximate the original. The focus on variation also means ignoring what the different texts have in common, as this is irrelevant for determining the genealogy of the text. This is what Chiesa calls the “purity of the lineage”:

*it was ‘pure’ in the parent, and progressively degenerated and polluted in the descendants. Every deviation is a hereditary taint, transmitted by the first carriers to their own children, and so on to all their descendants; by detecting the taint and its carriers, we can isolate a specific branch of the lineage.* (CHIESA 2020: 79)

Classically, stemmatological research goes through three phases. First, collecting all text witnesses to make a collation (“*recensio*”) of them. Comparing the variants is part of the second stage (“*examinatio*”), including interpreting the differences that make up the variation. Crucial are “monogenetic errors”: variation that occurs in two or more texts and that are virtually impossible to have come about independently of each other. Broadly speaking, four types of variation are distinguished: addition, omission, transposition and substitution. Addition and omission are about adding or removing information from the copied text, transposition involves moving parts in the structure of the text and substitution involves replacing information with other information. Specific forms of noise underlie variation. For example, omission can result from haplography, the writing of a segment of text once which appears twice (or more times) in the source-text. The opposite, writing words twice instead of once when copying, is called dittography. The actual causes of the emergence of variants are sought in a number of technical aspects peculiar to copying. For example, anticipation is the result of a copyist who reads ahead in the exemplar of the text (and therefore omits a section of the exemplar in the copy text), or arrhythmia (a skip in the reading activity of the eyes which in turn can produce haplography -an omission- if the eyes skip ahead in the exemplar. This may give the impression that variation is a blind or unconscious process, but there are also conscious interventions to make the text more readable or comprehensible. In practice, it is difficult to distinguish between a conscious intervention and an unconscious “slip of the pen.”

### ***Reflection: Stemmatology and Translations in Print Media***

Several caveats should be noted. Stemmatology was originally developed for analysing handwritten texts, and it is uncertain whether it can be effectively applied to mechanically produced texts. Although printed texts can exist in multiple copies, the typesetting process itself involved manual intervention. And what of translations? While translations are present within traditional stemmatological research (see MACÉ 2020: 151-

152), they are not the primary focus of research. In Stemmatology, the original or primal text is central, and the various text witnesses primarily serve as tools for reconstructing this original. Retranslations, therefore, do not naturally fit within this framework as objects of study in their own right.

A more fundamental issue is that Stemmatology's emphasis on reconstructing an original positions alternative versions as obstacles or deviations from this primary text. This view conflicts with the paradigm of Descriptive Translation Studies, which begins its analysis with the translation and the receiving culture, "and only then works its way in gradual and clearly defined steps towards the source-text" (TOURY 1980: 82). Thus, in the case study that follows, I will focus on the alternative versions of the target texts, exploring the different interpretations they offer of the source text. Here, the variations introduced in the transmission of texts are not mere "noise," but valuable tools for examining how texts were handled, adapted, and reinterpreted.

The term "errors" is particularly problematic in this context because it usually implies a fault or deviation in a negative sense. In many cases, however, these variations reflect intentional choices or specific interpretations. West (1973: 32) uses the term "secondary reading" instead of "error," but this too has normative implications. Likewise, "innovation" (CONTI 2020: 243) suggests a deliberate act of creativity, which may also be subjective. For clarity, I use the terms "variation" to align with the stemmatological notion of a "common error".

### **Case Study: "Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet" by Lev Tolstoi**

In 1872, Lev Tolstoi (1828–1910) was invited to contribute to the journal *Beseda* (*Conversation*), for which he wrote "Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet" ("God Sees the Truth but Waits") (TOLSTOI 1957: 655). This story echoes an episode from "War and Peace"<sup>2</sup> and belongs to the category of "narodnye rasskazy", folk tales Tolstoi crafted for a broad audience, written in accessible language with a moral message.

#### ***The Story***

The protagonist, a cheerful merchant named Ivan Dmitrievich Aksënov, is wrongfully arrested on his way to a fair in Nizhnii Novgorod. After spending the night at an inn where a fellow merchant is robbed and murdered, the police discover a bloodstained knife in Aksënov's luggage. Although he pleads his innocence, Aksënov is sentenced to 26 years of forced labour in Siberia, leaving behind his wife and young children.

During his years in prison, Aksënov wrestles with despair and hopelessness but gradually finds solace in his faith, convinced that God knows the truth and will ultimately vindicate him. Aksënov becomes a model prisoner – deeply religious, obedient, and well-regarded by both the warden and his fellow inmates. He acquires a copy of the *Lives of the Saints* to deepen his religious devotion.

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<sup>2</sup> In this novel the character Platon Karataev shares a similar tale with Pierre Bezukhov while they are both held captive by the French (MEDZHIBOVSKAYA 2008: 149-150; MCLEAN 2004: 87-88).

Years into his sentence, Aksënov encounters Makar Semyonovich, a career criminal from his hometown who initially mocks him. Aksënov later discovers Makar attempting to dig an escape tunnel. When questioned by the warden, Aksënov chooses to remain silent about Makar's plan. Moved by Aksënov's gesture, Makar eventually confesses to the murder at the inn and begs for Aksënov's pardon. By the time the order for Aksënov's release reaches Siberia, he has already passed away.

The story's title reflects Aksënov's enduring faith in divine justice: "God sees the truth, but does not reveal it easily." While the plot may resemble a whodunit<sup>3</sup>, "Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet" is primarily a moral tale about forgiveness, faith, and the notion of divine truth.<sup>4</sup>

### Translations in Dutch Newspapers

<i>N°</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>
1	30-3-1884	De onschuldig veroordeelde	Algemeen Handelsblad
2	14-5-1884	De Onschuldig Veroordeelde	Soerabaijasch Handelsblad
3	18-10-1885	De onschuldig veroordeelde	Delftsche Courant
4	14-11-1885	De onschuldig veroordeelde	Schiedamsche Courant
5	18-11-1885	De Onschuldig Veroordeelde	Vlaardingsche Courant
6	7-9-1887	Een ware geschiedenis	Soerabaijasch Handelsblad
7	26-6-1890	Onschuldig veroordeeld	De Zuid-Willemsvaart
8	31-12-1890	Onschuldig veroordeeld: een ware gebeurtenis	Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad
9	24-8-1891	Onschuldig veroordeeld: een ware gebeurtenis	Sumatra-Courant
10	6-12-1898	Een ware Geschiedenis	De Sociaaldemokraat
11	10-9-1900	Een banneling	De Avondpost
12	13-9-1900	Een banneling	Vlissingse Courant
13	9-10-1900	Een banneling	Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad
14	28-11-1900	Een banneling	De Sumatra Post
15	6-9-1903	Een banneling	Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant
16	9-9-1903	De schuldige	Venloosche Courant
17	26-9-1903	Een banneling	De Morgenpost
18	3-10-1903	Een banneling	Nieuwsblad van Friesland

<sup>3</sup> Stephen King based his novella "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption" (1982) on the plot of Tolstoi's story, which was later adapted into the 1994 feature film.

<sup>4</sup> In 1881, after deciding to stop "indulging" in novel writing and dismissing most of his own works, Tolstoi made an exception for "Bog pravdu vidit." He wrote, "I consign my own artistic productions to the category of bad art, excepting the story God Sees the Truth" (TOLSTOI 1951: 157).

19	7-10-1903	Een banneling	De Locomotief
20	23-10-1903	Een banneling	De Sumatra Post
21	8-11-1903	Een banneling	Schager Courant
22	30-7-1904	Een banneling	De Preanger-Bode
23	3-3-1906	God ziet de waarheid maar wacht	Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad
24	4-8-1916	Ware geschiedenis	Leeuwarder Courant
25	21-3-1925	Een ware geschiedenis	De Tribune

Table1: Chronological overview of the translations of “Bog pravdu vidit” in Dutch newspapers

### At least 25 publications

“Bog pravdu vidit, da ne skoro skazhet” flourished in Dutch newspapers, appearing on their pages at least 25 times between 1884 and 1925.<sup>5</sup> As with copied manuscripts, the exact number of retranslations remains unknown. Unlike books, contributions published in newspapers and magazines are generally excluded from bibliographies, making it difficult to track their full extent. The 25 translations referenced here come from the *Russian Literature in Dutch Newsprint* database, compiled from newspapers digitised in the Delpher database (Royal Dutch Library). Although Delpher contains over 2 million newspaper editions, it does not represent the complete archive of Dutch newspapers, so these 25 instances may underestimate the actual total.

### Discussion

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse all 25 translations in detail. However, the use of 8 different titles alone highlights the substantial variation among them. Some patterns can be identified; for example, certain clusters of texts appear in close succession, sharing the same title and suggesting uniformity. These sequences resemble waves radiating from an initial point, with identifiable clusters occurring in 1884-1885 (translations 1-5), 1890-1891 (translations 7-9), 1900 (translations 11-14), and 1903-1904 (translations 15, 17-22).

We focus here on two specific clusters within this retranslation history: translations 1 to 5 are the “alpha” translations, using Greek letters as in Stemmatology to distinguish text traditions. Translations 11 to 14 are the “bèta” translations (within text traditions inverted commas are used to distinguish variants). Both waves were selected because they represent two distinct text traditions that can be clearly identified and, more pragmatically, contain a manageable number of translations for analysis.

### Parameters

All 25 translations were compared using 17 predefined parameters, with a focus on peritextual information, transliteration of proper names, and narrative elements. The

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<sup>5</sup> In comparison, 11 translations of the story were published in book form in French, German, and English prior to 1900 (MOTYLËVA 1961: 473-477).

significance of peritextual data in translated literature has been well established (cfr BATCHELOR 2018). The handling of proper names is also informative, particularly at a time when Russian names were not widely recognised in the Netherlands; this often indicates the intermediary translation used (BOULOGNE 2008). The narrative components were chosen based on in-depth analyses of “Bog pravdu vidit” by Jahn (1975 & 2004), McLean (2004), and Tussing Orwin (2007).

## Alpha

### *Russia-Firenze-Amsterdam*

In late February 1884, a French translation of “Bog pravdu vidit” appeared in the *Revue Internationale*, a new magazine published in Florence with European aspirations. The translation, titled “Un cas”, was completed by Olga Smirnoff<sup>6</sup>. The first Dutch translation followed in March 1884 under the title “De onschuldig veroordeelde” (“The Innocent Convict”) in the national newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad*, using “Un cas” as its source text.

This transmission route was facilitated by the fact that the *Revue Internationale* had a Dutch distributor<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, the *Algemeen Handelsblad* had previously acknowledged the magazine's arrival in the Dutch market and regularly reported on its contents. Further evidence for this connection can be seen in a number of textual similarities between the two translations. The table below compares specific elements from each translation, referred to as  $\alpha^{\circ}$  (*Revue Internationale*) and  $\alpha 1$  (*Algemeen Handelsblad*).

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Surname</i>	<i>Place</i>
Tolstoi 1872	<i>Bog pravdu vidit (...)</i> God sees the Truth (...)	Aksėnov	Nizhnii Novgorod
$\alpha^{\circ}$	Un Cas. Nouvelle russe. A Case. Russian Novella.	Akssėnoff	Nijni
$\alpha 1$	De onschuldig veroordeelde The Innocent Convict	Aksenoff	Nynni

Table 2: comparison Tolstoi (1872), *Revue Internationale* (1884) and *Algemeen Handelsblad* (1884).

<sup>6</sup> Olga Nikolaevna Smirnova (1834–1893) spent most of her life based in France. She first became acquainted with Tolstoi in 1857. Regarding his folk tales, she expressed a desire to introduce these works to a French audience, stating, “It seems interesting to introduce France to these short stories. (...) The language is folksy without becoming trivial” (SMIRNOFF 1885: 487; see also REGNIERS 2019). For more on Smirnova and the *Revue Internationale*, see Aloe 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Newspaper records also document the publication of Tolstoi’s story in the *Revue Internationale*. See *Het Vaderland*, 5 March 1884, 2.

The evocative statement “God sees the truth, but waits”<sup>8</sup> becomes the rather mundane title “A Case” in the French translation. To compensate for the Russian title’s loss, Smirnoff adds an equivalent phrase as an epigraph: “Le bon Dieu sait la vérité, mais il ne la révèle pas vite (proverbe)” – “The good Lord knows the truth, but he doesn’t reveal it quickly (proverb).”

The subtitle “Russian Novella” is omitted, and while “A Case” hints at an atmosphere of mystery, “The Innocent Convict” in the Dutch version removes much of the suspense central to Tolstoi’s story. The Dutch translator replaces Smirnoff’s epigraph with the proverb “He who does good to his enemy heaps coals of fire on his head,” an antiquated phrase suggesting kindness in response to wrongdoing. This expression originates from the Old Testament book of Proverbs<sup>9</sup>.

As expected, the main character’s name shows the influence of the source text, with “Aksenoff” appearing as a Dutchified version of the French transliteration “Akssénoff”. The change from “Nijni” to “Nynni” is an example of itacism – a merger in pronunciation of vowel sounds that remain distinct in spelling. The doubled “n” in “Nynni” is a case of dittography, where a letter or part of a word is written twice.

Given these similarities, Smirnoff’s translation is the “progenitor” of what I refer to as the alpha translations. Further analysis, based on three specific parameters, confirms that subsequent translations exhibit a high degree of similarity to  $\alpha 1$  and can therefore be classified as part of the same lineage.

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Date(s)</i>
$\alpha 1$	Algemeen Handelsblad	30-3-1884
$\alpha 2$	Soerabaijasch Handelsblad	14-5-1884
$\alpha 3$	Delftsche Courant	18-10-1885
$\alpha 4$	Schiedamsche Courant	14-11-1885
$\alpha 5$	Vlaardingsche Courant	18-11-1885

Table 3:  $\alpha$ -translations

### ***One Translation Becomes Five***

Within two months of the first Dutch translation’s publication, a version appeared in the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*, a newspaper based on Java in the former Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia). The following year, another translation was published in the *Delftsche Courant*, which explicitly cited the *Algemeen Handelsblad* as its source (referred to as “H.”). Further translations also appeared in the *Schiedamsche Courant* and *Vlaardingsche Courant*.

<sup>8</sup> A popular saying in Russian, see Jahn 1975: 265-266.

<sup>9</sup> “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you” (PROVERBS 25: 21-22).

In the table below, the translations from the *Algemeen Handelsblad* ( $\alpha_1$ ), *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* ( $\alpha_2$ ), *Delftsche Courant* ( $\alpha_3$ ), *Schiedamsche Courant* ( $\alpha_4$ ), and *Vlaarding-sche Courant* ( $\alpha_5$ ) are listed chronologically, alongside the source text (ST) and the French intermediary translation ( $\alpha^\circ$ ).

TXT	Author's name	Epigraph	Duration of Aksënov's prison-time	Vari- ant
ST	L. N. Tolstoi	No epigraph	Na katorge, Aksënov zhil 26 let Aksënov lived 26 years in forced labour	
$\alpha^\circ$	Léon Tolstoi	Epigraph	26 ans aux travaux forcés 26 years in forced labour	$\alpha$
$\alpha_1$	Leon Tolstoi	Epigraph	28 jaar dwangarbeider 28 years in forced labour	$\alpha$
$\alpha_2$	Leon Tolstoi	Epigraph	28 jaar dwangarbeider 28 years in forced labour	$\alpha$
$\alpha_3$	Legn Tolstoi	Epigraph	28 jaren lang dwangarbeider 28 years long in forced labour	$\alpha'$
$\alpha_4$	Legn Tolstoi	Epigraph	28 jaren lang dwangarbeider 28 years long in forced labour	$\alpha'$
$\alpha_5$	Legn Tolstoi	<b>No epigraph</b>	28 jaren lang dwangarbeider 28 years long in forced labour	$\alpha''$

Table 4: comparison translations  $\alpha$ -wave, 1884-1885.

Comparing the five translations in the alpha wave reveals that the author's name is incorrectly rendered as 'Legn Tolstoi' in  $\alpha_3$ , likely due to a reading or typesetting error. This same variant appears in  $\alpha_4$  and  $\alpha_5$ , making it a monogenetic error—an error that different editors are unlikely to have made independently, indicating a connection between these texts. Furthermore, the fact that none of the newspapers corrected the mistake suggests that Tolstoi's name was not yet widely recognised.

The epigraph added in  $\alpha_1$  is carried over in subsequent versions, except in  $\alpha_5$ , which makes this translation unique. Another notable difference is the change from "26 years" to "28 years." This may have been a misprint or a misreading. The figure "28 years" is repeated in  $\alpha_2$  through  $\alpha_5$ . In  $\alpha_3$ ,  $\alpha_4$ , and  $\alpha_5$ , the plural form of the noun ("years") is used, and an adjective ("long") is added to emphasise the length of Aksënov's imprisonment, adding a distinct nuance to these versions.

From the texts, it becomes clear that  $\alpha_1$  and  $\alpha_2$  are direct copies of  $\alpha$ , while  $\alpha_3$  and  $\alpha_4$  diverge slightly from these (forming a new subgroup,  $\alpha'$ ).  $\alpha_5$  shows further deviation from  $\alpha_1$  and can be considered a separate branch,  $\alpha''$ .

### **Transmission Chain**

Having identified the variants, we can now reconstruct the transmission chain that led to them (see Table 14). The translation first appeared in the national newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* and was subsequently picked up by the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*

in the Dutch East Indies. In 1885, the *Delftsche Courant* also referenced the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, initiating a second line of retransmission.

Delft, a provincial city between The Hague and Rotterdam, had a regional newspaper which then passed the translation on to the nearby towns of Schiedam and Vlaardingen, where it appeared in the *Schiedamsche Courant* and the *Vlaardingsche Courant*, respectively. Both the geographical and chronological spread suggest that within twenty months, the story travelled from the capital both to overseas territories and, separately, to provincial and local towns within the Netherlands.

## Bèta

### German-language Origins

The four Dutch translations from 1900 (see Table 6) are based on the German-language edition “Ein Verbannter” (“An Exile”), which was published as a book in 1889 and circulated in periodicals around the turn of the century. The text also appeared in the Swiss monthly *Am häuslichen Herd: schweizerische illustrierte Monatschrift* (1898–1899). We refer to this translation as  $\beta^\circ$ .

The transliteration of names is consistent with the German edition, using “Akszjonow” and “Makar Ssemjonow” (compared to “Aksenoff” and “Macaire Séménovitch” in the  $\alpha$  translations). Additionally, there are content variations that can be traced back to the German translation.

TXT	
Tolstoi 1872	Smolodu Aksënov mnogo pil, i kogda napivalsia – buianil From a young age Aksenov drank a lot, and when he got drunk he became rowdy
German $\beta^\circ$	Als junger Mann trank er viel und suchte Händel, wenn er angetrunken war As a young man, he drank a lot and when he was drunk he made trouble
Dutch 1890	Als jongmensch dronk hij nog al een stevigen borrel en trachtte als hij dronken was zaken te doen As a young man, he used to drink heavily and tried to do business when drunk
$\alpha 1$ (1884)	In zijne jongelingsjaren had hij veel gedronken en werd dan zeer luidruchtig In his young age he had drunk a lot and then [when he was drunk] became very loud

Table 5: description

In the 1890 Dutch translation, the young Aksënov is portrayed as a drinker who tries to conduct business while intoxicated. Although he was indeed a merchant, this interpretation stems from a mistranslation based on the German version. The German equivalent of the Russian word “buianil” is “Händel suchen”, meaning “looking for trouble”. However, the Dutch translator misread “Händel” (meaning “trouble” or “quarrel” in German) as the visually similar “Handel” (meaning “trade” or “business”

in Dutch). While “Handel” has the same meaning in both German and Dutch, the Dutch translator opted for the synonym “business”. This error, in which the translator failed to recognise an idiomatic expression, is a classic example of a “false friend”, where a literal translation into Dutch was mistakenly chosen.

### *Revised Version of the Story*

Wilhelm Goldschmidt<sup>10</sup> was the translator of  $\beta^\circ$ , a translation based on the 1886 redaction of the source text. It was not uncommon for Tolstoi to revise his works, and in this case, the changes reflect the author’s evolving beliefs. From 1881 onwards, Tolstoi adopted a philosophy combining pacifism and Christian anarchism (see MEDZHIBOVSKAYA 2008). Tolstoi’s secretary and chief disciple, Vladimir Chertkov, advocated for adaptations to “Bog pravdu vidit” to align the text with Tolstoi’s new philosophical outlook. These revisions aimed to ensure that the version published by Tolstoi’s Posrednik press in a low-cost, popular edition reflected his changed views (JAHN 2004: 85-86).

The 1886 version differs from the 1872 version in twenty-two instances. Most of these are minor syntactical revisions<sup>11</sup>, but a more significant change is that, in the later version, Aksënov reads the Gospel (“Evangelië”) in prison rather than saints’ lives (“Chet’i-Minei”). The key change involves Aksënov’s interrogation by the prison governor about the tunnel that has been discovered. In the 1872 version, Aksënov responds, “I didn’t see it and I don’t know.” Chertkov found this reply disturbing, commenting that “Aksënov is resorting to a deliberate lie to protect his comrade. Moreover, this very act seems like the most significant moment of his life. But it would remain so even if he were freed from deceit” (TOLSTOI 1935: 141). Chertkov suggested that Aksënov should deny digging the tunnel and remain silent about whether he knew who did. Tolstoi agreed in a letter, adding, “(...) do it yourself. If I were to do it, I would rewrite everything, and I need the time for other things” (TOLSTOI 1935: 139). With Tolstoi’s approval, Chertkov revised the sentence to read, “Ne mogu skazat’, vashe blagorodie. Mne Bog ne velit skazat’. Ia ne skazhu. Chto khotite so mnoi delaite - vlast’ vasha” (TOLSTOI 1957: 334), which translates as, “I cannot say it, your honour. God does not allow me to say it, and I will not say it. Do with me what you wish; the power is yours.”

### *New Translations*

In 1900, four Dutch newspapers published Tolstoi’s story. Like “Ein Verbannter” ( $\beta^\circ$ ), each version carries the title “The Exile” (“De banneling” in Dutch).

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<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm Goldschmidt (1841–after 1922) began publishing *Novi russkii bazar*, a Russian edition of the Berlin fashion magazine *Der Bazar*, in 1865. Later, he also published the German-language *St Petersburg Herold* and ran a bookshop in St Petersburg. After returning to Germany in 1888, he translated works by Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, and others (Wer ist’s 1922: 502).

<sup>11</sup> For a complete overview, see Tolstoi 1957: 331–334.

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Date(s)</i>
β 1	De Avondpost	10-9-1900
β 2	Vlissingsche courant	13-9-1900; 14-9-1900; 15-9-1900
β 3	Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad	9-10-1900
β 4	De Sumatra Post	28-11-1900; 29-11-1900

Table 6: β-translations

To highlight the differences from both Tolstoi’s 1872 original and the α translations, some of the changes are listed below:

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Features Aksënov</i>	<i>Time in prison</i>	<i>Book he reads</i>
Tolstoi 1872	rusyi, kudriavyi blond, curly hair	26 let 26 years	Chet’i-Minei The Life of Saints
α°	blond, frisé blond, curly hair	26 ans 26 years	vie des saints The Life of Saints
α1	blonden krullenkop blond, curly hair	28 jaar 28 years	Leven der heiligen The Life of Saints
β°	braungelockte brown hair	26 Jahre 26 years	Evangelium gospel
β1-4	bruingelokte brown hair	27 jaar 27 years	bijbel bible

Table 7: comparison β-translations to α and Tolstoi 1872

For reasons unknown, the main character’s hair colour changes. The word “bruingelokte” (used in versions β1-4) is a Germanism, derived from the German “braungelockte”. Additionally, the Dutch translations vary in their depiction of the character’s length of imprisonment, suggesting once more that errors or inconsistencies easily slip in when translating numerical details.

A more notable change, however, is the adaptation of the saints’ lives to align with the Gospels. According to Jahn (2004: 85-86), this was an intentional choice in the 1886 redaction, intended to reflect Aksënov’s transformation into a Christ-like figure during his time in prison, as saints are often portrayed as imitating Christ. The Dutch translations use the broader term “Bible” instead of specifically referencing the Gospels. In the Dutch context the Bible is commonly viewed as an inseparable whole. This choice thus reflects a strategy to domesticate the text.

#### *Variance*

A close examination of the β-translations reveals 22 variations, which can be grouped into five categories: (1) accents, punctuation, and capitalisation, (2) spelling, (3) articles, (4) possessive pronouns, and (5) semantic variation. Examples of each category are provided below.

## (1) Stress, Punctuation, Capitalisation

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Example 1</i>	<i>Example 2</i>	<i>Example 3</i>
β1-2	z <sup>ó</sup> ontsteld is hij he is so upset	(...) liet men haar bij hem. (...) they let her come to him.	dat <b>H</b> ij mij genadig zij that He may have mercy on me
β3	zoo ontsteld is hij he is so upset	(...) liet men haar bij hem. (...) they let her come to him.	dat hij mij genadig zij that he may have mercy on me
β4	zoo ontsteld is hij he is so upset	(...) liet men haar bij hem! (...) they let her come to him!	dat hij mij genadig zij that he may have mercy on me

Table 8: comparison β1-4

The difference between "z<sup>ó</sup>" and "zoo" (example 1) is simply a matter of emphasis, as is the use of an exclamation mark (example 2). Capitalising pronouns referring to a supreme being (example 3) introduces a subtle shift in meaning: in versions δ1 and δ2, "He" refers specifically to God, while in δ3 and δ4, "he" refers to an unnamed person.

## (2) spelling

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Example 4</i>	<i>Example 5</i>
β1-2	Heb je 't niet gedaan Didn't you do it	zenden aan den czaar send the czar
β3-4	Heb je het niet gedaan Didn't you do it	zenden aan den czar send the czar

Table 9: comparison β1-4

These differences are, for the most part, barely perceptible. The elliptical and colloquial form "'t" is a shortened version of the definite article "het" ("it") "czar" may represent a case of haplography for "czaar".

## (3) alternative renderings of articles

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Example 6</i>	<i>Example 7</i>
β1-2	de jonge koopman	hij klaagde zichzelf als <b>den</b> moordenaar aan
β3-4	<b>een</b> jong koopman	hij klaagde zichzelf als moordenaar aan

Table 10: comparison β1-4

In Example 6, the choice between the definite and indefinite article ('de' versus 'een'; 'the' versus 'a') reflects a subtle difference in whether the person is already known to the narrator. In Russian, articles do not exist, so this distinction must be added in translation. In Example 7, yet another interpretation arises depending on whether Makar sees himself specifically as the merchant's murderer or more generally as a murderer.

## (4) Possessive Pronouns

<i>TXT</i>	<i>Example 8</i>	<i>Example 9</i>	<i>Example 10</i>
β1-2	Op zijne beurt In turn	Mijne eigen zaken My own business	Toen zij haren man zag When she saw her husband

β3-4	Op zijn beurt In turn	Mijn eigen zaken My own business	Toen zij haar man zag When she saw her husband
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Table 11: comparison β1-4

The inflection of possessive pronouns followed the standard spelling conventions of the time (WESTERMANN 1931: 38-39). However, β3-4 consistently diverges from this norm, adapting the text throughout. Whether this choice was progressive is difficult to determine, though it aligns with the simplification of spelling formally introduced in 1934.

(5) Semantic differences

TXT	Example 11	Ex. 12	Ex. 13	Ex. 14
β1-2	Een met bloed bevekt mes A bloodstained knife	8000 roebels 8000 rubles	En bad veel And prayed a lot	Ben ik hierheen gekomen, broeder I came here, brother
β3	<b>Een mes</b> , een met bloed bevekt mes A knife, a bloodstained knife	8000 roebels 8000 rubles	<b>En had veel verdriet</b> And was very sad	Ben ik hierheen <b>gezonden</b> broeder I was sent here brother
β4	<b>Een mes</b> , een met bloed bevekt mes A knife, a bloodstained knife	5000 roebels 5000 rubles	En had veel verdriet And was very sad	Ben ik <b>hier heen</b> gezonden broeder I was sent here brother

Table 12: comparison β1-4

The phrase “a knife, a bloodstained knife” is a rhetorical repetition and might also be due to dittography. The reduction of 8,000 roubles to 5,000 roubles offers further evidence of the careless handling of figures in the translation. The substitution of “had a lot of grief” with “prayed a lot” represents a meaningful shift. Together with the use of ‘he’ instead of ‘Him’ for the supreme being, this suggests that β3 & β4, both colonial newspapers, are opting for a less explicitly religious interpretation of the text.

TXT	Newspaper	Variant
β1	<i>De Avondpost</i>	β
β2	<i>Vlissingsche courant</i>	β
β3	<i>Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad</i>	β'
β4	<i>De Sumatra Post</i>	β''

Table 13: variants of β-translations

*Transmission Chain*

The tables above show a significant number of differences between β1–2 and β3–4, suggesting that while both sets descend from a similar translation (β°), they have developed distinct characteristics. For this reason, we refer to them as β (β1 and β2) and β' (β3 and β4).

Examining the differences within the  $\beta$  translations,  $\beta_2$  differs from  $\beta_1$  in only one instance (a punctuation variation) and can be considered an almost exact copy. In the  $\beta'$  group,  $\beta_4$  differs from  $\beta_3$  in four instances, with variations that are independent of the earlier  $\beta$  translations. This indicates that either  $\beta_1$  or  $\beta_2$  may have served as the source for  $\beta_3$ .

Given that De Avondpost ( $\beta_1$ ) was a national newspaper, while the Vlissingsche Courant was a local paper, it is most likely that  $\beta_1$  was the source for  $\beta_3$ . Since  $\beta_4$  shares most of its variations with  $\beta_3$  but also has a few unique ones, only  $\beta_3$  could have served as the source for  $\beta_4$ .

### Family Tree (“Stemma”) of Translations

When we combine all the information about the two waves of translation into a single stemma, we obtain a family tree that displays variations across different levels: the source texts (Tolstoi 1872 and 1886), intermediate translations ( $\alpha^\circ$  being a French translation and  $\beta^\circ$  being a German one), and the Dutch translations ( $\alpha_1-5$  and  $\beta_1-4$ ). The arrows indicate direct kinship relationships, while the curved lines suggest a possible, though not definitive, lineage.

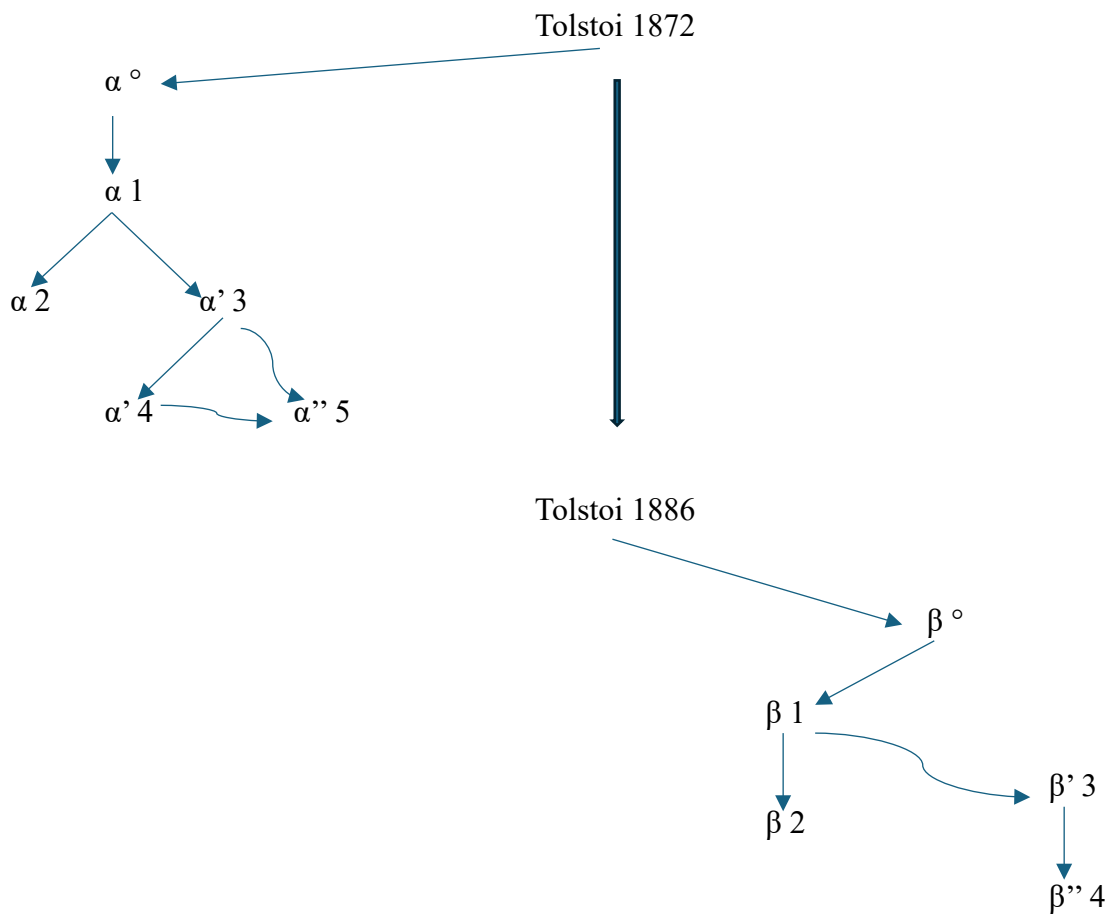


Table 14: Stemma of the retranslations of “Bog pravdu vidit”

## Conclusions

Given the limitations of this case study—centred on a single story within a specific target culture and restricted to a narrow temporal and spatial context—we conclude with some preliminary observations. I begin by summarising key insights into the phenomenon of literary retranslations in print media. This is followed by a discussion of the distinctive characteristics of translations within this medium and an analysis of the motives behind retranslation. I then explore the potential contributions of Stemmatology to this field of study and conclude by outlining possible directions for future research.

### *Retranslation in Periodicals*

In recent years, research on retranslation has gradually expanded to include a broader range of literary texts and genres (PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023: 15, 19). However, print media outside the traditional book format have largely been overlooked in this context. The numerous retranslations of Russian stories and novels found in Dutch newspapers suggest that periodicals deserve closer attention. These examples may reasonably be considered representative of broader patterns observable in periodicals.

It is also important to consider the source text, as much of 19<sup>th</sup>-century fiction originally appeared in periodicals. This is true for Tolstoi's story as well. Newspapers, in particular, frequently sourced translations from other media outlets, indicating a dynamic network through which translations circulated widely.

A distinctive feature of newspaper translations is the anonymity of their translators. Unlike most other periodicals, newspapers were typically collaborative efforts, which helps explain why individual authors and translators are rarely credited.

Another notable characteristic of newspaper translations is the precision with which they can be situated in time and place. The location of publication is usually known, and publication dates can often be pinpointed to the exact day. This enables researchers to establish a fixed chronology. Furthermore, it is possible to estimate the readership of specific newspapers, offering insights into the market that are rarely achievable for book-form publications.

### *Time and Space*

When examining specific features of newspaper retranslations, the factors of time and space are particularly significant. For instance, the speed at which translations of “Bog pravdu vidit” spread is striking. While the transition from the French intermediary translation to the first Dutch translation ( $\alpha^0$  to  $\alpha_1$ ) took approximately five weeks, the spread between Dutch newspapers was considerably faster, as evidenced by the mere three days between  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$ . In contrast, the dissemination to overseas territories took significantly longer due to the physical distance the newspapers had to cover.

Space is another important parameter, though it cannot be considered independently of time. Retranslations appear to spread in a wave-like motion, with a clear orientation from the centre to the periphery. The periphery refers not only to geographically remote colonial areas in Asia but also to regional and local newspapers. Nationally circulated newspapers often had their content adopted by smaller regional publications. The  $\alpha$ -wave

suggests a chain of “borrowing,” where regional newspapers derived material from national outlets, which, in turn, became the source for local newspapers. Although retranslations followed one another relatively quickly, each newspaper appears to have catered to its own audience and distribution network.

### ***Retranslation and its Motives***

The nine Dutch translations under discussion appear to stem from two distinct lineages: a French translation ( $\alpha$ ) and a German translation ( $\beta$ ). As defined by Aleveto do Amaral (2019), intermediate translations such as these are also recognised as part of the multilingual framework of retranslation. In this corpus,  $\alpha 1$  and  $\beta 1$  are the only interlingual translations into Dutch, as they are direct translations of the French and German versions, respectively. Subsequent translations in these chains – such as  $\alpha 3$ , which is a translation of  $\alpha 1$  and later becomes the source text for  $\alpha 4$  – represent a continuous sequence of translations.

How, then, should we classify these retranslations  $\alpha 1$ –5 and  $\beta 2$ –4? According to the typology suggested by Peeters (2024: 13), each of the Dutch retranslations here is at least a revision, if not a near-copy, as less than 20% of the text has been altered. However, the degree of change does not necessarily equate to the significance of those changes. This taxonomy does not account for the potential impact of minor alterations, particularly when these are perpetuated in later versions. A more pragmatic classification might differentiate between changes to punctuation and spelling, on the one hand, and significant variations in content, on the other. Yet this distinction, too, can be subjective. For instance, the choice not to capitalise references to the divine might seem a minor typographic decision but carries considerable significance in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century context.

The eagerness of newspapers to print and adapt pre-existing Dutch translations of fiction may have been driven by various motives. One reason might have been the desire to introduce their readership to a compelling story. Titles like “Onschuldig Veroordeeld” (“Innocently Convicted”) suggest an appeal in line with the news-oriented narratives of the time. However, such reception-based arguments remain speculative. More tangible evidence supports the view that colonial, regional, and local papers often lacked the resources to commission their own translations. Consequently, they may have relied on the selections of more authoritative newspapers, finding it more cost-effective to adopt and revise an existing translation. Moreover, by sourcing material from a newspaper whose style they sought to emulate, they were able to enhance their cultural capital. These practices align with what Pym (1998: 79) describes as passive retranslation, where the frequency of retranslation reflects an ongoing demand for the text.

It is also plausible that editors revised existing translations before publication to update or adapt the text for their readers (Gambier 1994: 416; Deane-Cox 2014: 12), or to conform with the newspaper’s in-house style guide—what Ladmiral (2011: 43) refers to as “banal editorial reasons.” Each new translation, therefore, effectively rewrites the Dutch text. This iterative process of copying and editing introduces discrepancies, which are subsequently adopted in later versions. As a result, each retranslation moves further

away from the original source text. In this sense, the text is never static but continually evolves, ensuring its ongoing vitality.

### ***The Added Value of Stemmatology***

The analysis of the target texts reveals that the age of printed texts does not preclude variation. Indeed, none of the retranslations discussed here is an exact copy of any other. The large number of published translations of “Bog pravdu vidit” in Dutch newspapers prompted the use of stemmatology – a method designed to identify patterns in variation. By applying the genealogical method, the translations were systematically arranged. This approach highlighted the chronology and shared variations among the texts, making their relationships visible and providing insights into the practice of (re)translating in newspapers. Stemmatology, with its focus on variation, offers a means to recognise patterns and explain differences, particularly when they stem from reading and copying errors.

Whether Stemmatology is broadly applicable to (re)translation studies is a more complex question. However, there are specific situations where it can add significant value, concerning both the source and target texts. In cases involving an unstable source text – Tolstói’s story being a prime example – Stemmatology can help identify the precise source text (or combination of sources) used in translations. Similarly, for target texts that may have been produced via intermediate translations, Stemmatology proves effective in tracing their origins and the texts that influenced them. As the case study demonstrates, Stemmatology’s focus on identifying common variations is critical for detecting intertextual influences, regardless of their form. This makes Stemmatology particularly well-suited for reception-historical research into the antecedents of a specific translation. An additional advantage is the method’s ability to incorporate (even provisionally unknown) texts into the genealogy, thanks to its reliance on formal logic.

Furthermore, Stemmatology offers valuable tools for translation studies focused on variation. While retranslations are an obvious application, the method’s scope extends beyond this to include revised translations, reissues, and other forms of textual variation. For mapping variation in retranslations, Stemmatology is particularly effective because it links variations to the textual lineage, offering a clearer picture of the relationships between texts. One of its key advantages is the ability to compare an entire corpus of texts simultaneously. However, for researchers relying on manual close reading – as was the case in this study – it is essential to carefully select predictors of variation. This highlights the importance of meticulously recording even seemingly minor textual differences, as these can yield significant insights into the texts’ relationships and histories.

### ***Further Research***

The complex landscape of translated fiction in periodicals, with its numerous retranslations, becomes more comprehensible when visualised through a stemma. A stemma not only aids in mapping the relationships between translations but also helps identify recurring patterns, such as centre-periphery sequences or the specific attitudes towards translation adopted by national, overseas, and regional periodicals.

Future research should investigate whether the wave-like pattern of translation diffusion observed here is a dominant phenomenon. It would also be valuable to determine whether this pattern consistently forms a "waterfall" system, as seen in the case study, or if alternative dynamics exist – for instance, the presence of “super diffusers,” newspapers that trigger multiple retranslations across various publications in a single instance. A more historicised approach could provide greater context for the adoption and adaptation of translations, shedding light on how the practice evolved over time.

Another important avenue of research is the extent to which the medium of the newspaper shaped the way fiction was translated. Additionally, the role of technological advancements in printing and publishing in facilitating the rapid spread of translations warrants further exploration. While answering these qualitative questions poses significant challenges, empirical research could offer valuable insights and contribute to a deeper understanding of these phenomena.

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**Piet Van Poucke**

## Canonisation and Renaming Retranslating Russian Book Titles into Dutch

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### Abstract

*This article examines how translators, editors and publishers handle the titles from Russian literary works in Dutch retranslations. Since a title constitutes a distinct component of the paratext and lies outside the main body of the literary text, it is reasonable to expect specific rules governing the translation and retranslation of titles. This study explicitly focuses on the adaptation of titles in the context of retranslation, with a distinction drawn between canonical and non-canonical works. Each title is examined to determine which of the ten identified title functions are prioritised and how different translations may foreground different functions. Specifically, this paper considers whether the titles of canonical works are more rigorously “protected” against adaptation and examines the extent to which new titles offer a more literal rendering of the source text. Additionally, this article explores the potential role of ideology in this process, particularly in relation to the handling of politically sensitive literary works.*

*Keywords: retranslations, title, ideology, canonisation*

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Piet van Poucke

## Canonisation and Renaming

### Retranslating Russian Book Titles into Dutch

#### Abstract

*This article examines how translators, editors and publishers handle the titles from Russian literary works in Dutch retranslations. Since a title constitutes a distinct component of the paratext and lies outside the main body of the literary text, it is reasonable to expect specific rules governing the translation and retranslation of titles. This study explicitly focuses on the adaptation of titles in the context of retranslation, with a distinction drawn between canonical and non-canonical works. Each title is examined to determine which of the ten identified title functions are prioritised and how different translations may foreground different functions. Specifically, this paper considers whether the titles of canonical works are more rigorously “protected” against adaptation and examines the extent to which new titles offer a more literal rendering of the source text. Additionally, this article explores the potential role of ideology in this process, particularly in relation to the handling of politically sensitive literary works.*

#### Introduction

A central, yet elusive concern within scholarly analysis of literary translations revolves around the pursuit of “equivalence” between the source and target texts. Translations that deviate significantly from the source text are often viewed with some scepticism, as examining the differences between the original and its translation often reveals instances of manipulation, adaptation, or indeed, outright censorship. One component of a literary text where the expectation of “semantic equivalence” is generally considered less stringent than for the rest of the literary work is the title. As noted by Maurizio Viezzi (2011: 193), this component has historically been “rather neglected” within translation studies, even though an analysis of the translation strategy applied to the title can reveal much about the intentions of the translator, editor or publisher of a translated literary work, as well as provide insight into the intended purpose of the translation within the target culture. From this perspective, the translated title may also be viewed as both instrumental and dialogical in nature.

In this article, we investigate to what extent different causes of manipulation influence literary translation, with a particular focus on translations from Russian into Dutch. We compiled a corpus of Dutch titles for translated and retranslated Russian literary works from 1789 to 2020, identifying instances where retranslators, editors or publishers changed the titles compared to previous translations. Our aim is to explore the possible rationale underlying these modifications.

The case study reveals how (at least) two circumstances play a relevant role in the process, albeit to a different degree and not necessarily in a complementary way. On the one hand, the potential canonical status of the literary work in both the source and target cultures may influence translators' choices, as altering the title of a work becomes challenging once it has attained a certain standing and associated market position for the publishing house. On the other hand, ideological considerations may also be at play, particularly during the Cold War, when competing pro- and anti-communist publishers (and everything in between these extremes) vied for the attention of the prospective readers and readily employed marketing "strategies" to create appealing titles.

### **Book Titles and their Functions**

Titles are among the most prominent elements of a literary work's paratext and, as such, warrant separate examination from the main text. This is why, from the 1950s onwards, the "minor discipline" of "modern title science" (GENETTE 1988: 692) was developed and coined "titrologie". Following Hoek (1973), Genette aptly emphasises that a title is "an artifact created for reception or commentary" (1988: 693), an understanding which this article will take into account. However, we will not engage with the title's specificity within the source language; instead, our focus will be on the role it assumes within the target language and culture.

Titles merit distinct consideration in translation studies as they effectively function as "names" and should be approached accordingly. In principle, a "name" exists outside the "body" of a literary text, with its translation following a distinct set of conventions. Titles, as Nord (1995: 280-281) argues, "have to be considered as texts" and not merely as any text, but rather as "*prototypical* texts" with a straightforward syntactic-semantic structure. They "do not present any features which cannot be found in other texts as well – either regarding their textuality, or with respect to their structures, functions or conventionality. Therefore, titles can be considered a kind of model source-text" (281), allowing their translation to be studied independently from the main text, as they can be treated as a distinct genre (VIEZZI 2011: 185).

One of the earliest attempts to categorise the functions of titles was made by Nord, who identified distinctive, metatextual, phatic, informative (or referential), expressive and appellative functions (NORD 1995: 264). This list was further expanded by Viezzi, who proposed a set of ten features, comprising three essential features required in every title, and seven optional features that may or may not be present (VIEZZI 2011: 185-186).

According to Viezzi the **three essential functions** are the following:

- *Naming* (each cultural product has a name);
- *Phatic* (contact has to be established with the potential reader);
- *Informatory* (informing the public about the existence of such a product).

The **seven optional functions** are:

- *Distinctive* (to distinguish the product from other similar works);

- *Descriptive* (providing particular information to the public about content, genre etc.);
- *Expressive* (giving away the author's position about a theme);
- *Suggestive* (allowing the reader to interpret the work correctly);
- *Seductive* (meant to draw in the reader);
- *Intertextual* (referring to other cultural products);
- *Poetic* (adding poetic effect to the title).

These are the title functions that feature in this article to distinguish between the different translation strategies applied in Dutch translation with a view to emphasising, or indeed obscuring, certain elements that are present in the original literary work's title.

### **Translation and Retranslation of Book Titles**

In his comparison of 20th and 21st century fiction titles and their translations in Western contexts, Maurizio Viezzi noticed that “there is often a lack of semantic equivalence between a title and its translation” (2011: 183), highlighting the value of detailed analysis of translated (and retranslated) titles across cultures. The title of a translated literary work is not always determined by the translator but is frequently shaped by the editor and publisher, introducing an additional dimension to the study of translated titles. Given cultural variations in values and norms, literally translated titles may appear unappealing to the target audience, often prompting translators, editors and publishers to choose a non-literal translation strategy.

Indeed, titles of translated works reflect hybrid authorship, where the true author of the title can sometimes only be determined through the paratext of the translation – such as when the translator explicitly comments on the approach taken, including the title. A notable case in this regard is Dutch literary translator Hans Boland, who holds distinct views on translation strategies and readily adopts a polemical stance on certain translation decisions, as demonstrated in his essay *Zeer Russisch zeer. Over Dostojevski's Duivels* (2008), where he discusses and justifies his Dutch translation of Dostoevskii's<sup>1</sup> *Demons*. Here, we encounter a translator with a pronounced personal stance on translation strategy, encompassing – and perhaps especially – title choices. Once a translator achieves a certain level of prominence, they may begin to assert their personal signature on their work, a phenomenon that will be further explored in this chapter.

In cases where the editor or publisher is not proficient in the source language (as is likely in the case study presented in this chapter, given the relative unfamiliarity of Russian among the majority of Dutch native speakers), they are often unable to fully grasp the nuances of the original title. Consequently, they must rely on the “translator's loyalty” (NORD 1995: 282) to convey the intended meaning of the source text.

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter Russian names will be transliterated according to the Library of Congress system (ALA-LC), but without the diacritical marks above the letters.

Semantic equivalence, therefore, holds a less central role in title translation; in fact, as titles can perform up to ten distinct functions, translators must carefully balance which functions to prioritise. Title translation is inherently a “target-oriented” activity, best approached from the perspective of the “Skopos” theory, which emphasises a “function-oriented approach”. Thus, the potential impact on the target audience generally outweighs strict adherence to equivalence or accuracy. Within the framework of “functional translation”, it is essential that “the target title has to be in keeping with target-cultural norms and conventions with regard to form, syntax, textual design, and function markers”, while the translator simultaneously “should strive to make functional strategies compatible with the principle of loyalty towards the sender’s intentions and the recipients’ expectations” (NORD 1995: 270). Elements that resonate with one (source) audience may not necessarily translate effectively for another (target) audience. A title translated literally may convey an entirely different message to the target audience, potentially triggering unintended – intertextual – associations.

When retranslating a literary work – and hence reconsidering its title – the translator must consider an additional factor: not only should “translemic equivalence” with the source title be evaluated, but the existing title within the target culture must also be taken into account. It is up to the retranslator to either endorse or reject the choice made by the previous translator(s). This decision extends beyond mere personal preference; if we assume that retranslations are typically produced with a generational interval (approximately 25 years), the cultural context of the target audience will likely have shifted since the previous translation. This evolution of context may warrant the re-accentuation of aspects previously absent or underappreciated in the target culture. As Kris Peeters notes earlier in this journal issue, this temporal gap necessitates that the concepts of “closeness” and “novelty” be re-interpreted for each new cultural context.

Each of the ten functions titles can serve may be reconsidered in the process of re-accentuation. However, in the specific context of this case study (translations from Russian into Dutch predominantly during the 20th century) an additional factor is at play: ideology. Ideology not only influenced the selection of literary works for translation but also partly determined how these translations were executed. Given the importance of a compelling title as a marketing tool, ideology likely impacted the degree of “faithfulness” in title translations. This article examines the frequency with which retranslated Russian literary works in Dutch received new titles, which title functions shifted as a result of adaptation, and whether distinctions can be drawn between canonical and non-canonical works. The hypothesis is that altering the title of a literary work becomes less appropriate or desirable once a canonical work – typically among the most frequently retranslated – attains a certain level of recognition in the target culture.

## **Methodology**

For this case study, we will focus exclusively on the titles of novels (excluding poetry, fairy tales, short stories and similar genres) that were retranslated from Russian into Dutch between 1789 and 2020.

The first limitation, focusing on novels, is due to the fact that stories and poems are often published within collections, with only one overarching title rather than individual titles for each work. Moreover, poetry (re)translators generally have greater interpretative freedom, which significantly affects title choices. By limiting the corpus to novels, we confine ourselves to a one-to-one comparison and avoid the substantial discrepancies that may arise in poetry translations.

The timeframe of 1789-2020 is determined by the existing database of literary translations from Russian into Dutch. Emmanuel Waegemans and Cees Willemsen first catalogued all book-form translations from the earliest translation in 1789 to 1985; Waegemans subsequently extended this coverage to 2015 in a second volume. These data have been consolidated into an online database<sup>2</sup>, which we will use in its most recent version, updated to 2020, thereby establishing the corpus boundary.

To challenge our hypothesis whether canonical works are treated differently in translation compared to literary works by lesser-known authors, we will first try to establish which Russian authors hold “canonical” status in the Dutch target culture. As a relatively objective marker of a Russian literary work’s status in Dutch translation, we will reference the “Russian Library” [“De Russische bibliotheek”] series. Published since 1953 by the Amsterdam-based “van Oorschot” publishing house, this series represents high-quality Dutch translations of Russian classics from the 19th and 20th centuries. While not an official “canon”, it is arguably the most reliable means of distinguishing between canonical “must-read” works and lesser-known Russian literary works in Dutch translation.

In particular, we will examine how many of these literary works were retranslated between 1789 and 2020, and when retranslations exist, how often their titles differed from earlier translations. For literary works with subtitles in the source text, we will consider only the main title. The expectation is that the fame of canonical authors and their works (sometimes also in languages and across cultures beyond the target one) compels most (re)translators to maintain a certain “loyalty” to the original title; altering it could risk a loss of recognisability, thereby reducing the title’s promotional value for ordinary readers. Conversely, more prominent and experienced (re)translators may seek to leave their own mark by adopting an innovative title.

The retranslated titles will be categorised into five groups: (1) titles that remain unchanged in retranslation, (2) titles that are “foreignised” (i.e., rendered more literally than in previous translations), (3) titles that are “domesticated” (differs further from a “literal” translation than prior versions), (4) titles that are adapted but without a clear

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.benerus.be/cms/wp-content/uploads/BIBLIOGRAFIE-2020.pdf>

“foreignising” or “domesticating” tendency, and (5) titles that are changed multiple times throughout the retranslation process with different effects.

In the final phase, we will examine the prominent function(s) of these translated titles, tracing any shifts in emphasis from one function to another across retranslations. In determining the function, we will focus solely on the target text titles, which must align with the standards and expectations of the target culture. In other words, any shift in function will be assessed based on the target audience’s perspective, disregarding the role the source text played, or continues to play, within the source culture.

## Discussion

The database spanning 1789-2020 records 109 retranslated works, no fewer than 73 of which were reissued with a new title. This means that only 36 titles (or 33%) were retained in the retranslation process, highlighting the importance of title choice within the broader publication process. The corpus of 73 literary works with modified titles in translation are conveniently divided into two nearly equal subgroups, which provides statistical support for the quantitative findings of this case study. Specifically, the title of a work by a “canonical” author was altered in 36 instances, while a “non-canonical” work received a new title in 37 instances, allowing for the identification of certain trends and “norms” within each subgroup.

### *Works by Canonical Authors*

Of the 23 “canonical” authors (see the previous section for our selection criteria) included in the “Russian Library”, 11 feature in the corpus of retranslations with a modified title – M. Bulgakov, A. Chekhov, F. Dostoevskii, N. Gogol’, I. Goncharov, N. Leskov, B. Pasternak, A. Pushkin, M. Saltykov, L. N. Tolstoi and I. Turgenev. A total of 36 literary works show traces of adaptation of the title, with 19 cases of “foreignisation”, 6 cases of “domestication”, 10 cases exhibiting other types of adaptation and 1 case of changing translation strategies where the initial foreignisation approach was subsequently replaced by a domesticating approach.

### *Foreignisation or Restoring the Closeness to the Russian Title*

This first and largest category of translations for the subgroup of canonical authors is characterised by a common trend: the first translation was often rendered more appealing by enhancing the seductive function of the title, incorporating popularising modifications during the transition process from source to target language. In subsequent retranslations, some of these titles are partially “restored” to their “original” form.

One of the most pronounced cases of manipulation in translation is observed in the Dutch rendering of the title of Fëdor Dostoevskii’s *Crime and Punishment* [*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*]. The novel’s first translation into Dutch was done in 1885, at a time when Dostoevskii was not yet considered a canonical author in Europe and when the

Dutch cultural market lacked adequately trained literary translators capable of translating directly from Russian. Under these circumstances, the lion's share of literary translations from Russian were conducted indirectly, using intermediary translations from French or German (see Boulogne 2011 for a detailed translation history of Dostoevskii's works into Dutch). For *Crime and Punishment*, the initial Dutch translation was derived from German, retaining the title's conceptual framework as presented in German – *Schuld und Sühne* [*Schuld en boete*]. However, this was a rather unorthodox adaptation of Dostoevskii's Russian title, since the German version implies significantly different notions of *Guilt and Atonement*, imparting a more condemning and moralizing tone than Dostoevskii intended. In fact, Dostoevskii was not addressing “guilt” per se but rather conducting a more “clinical” exploration of the process of solving a “crime” without ascribing responsibility. The first retranslation, in 1895, partially restored the original meaning by focusing on *A Crime* [*Een misdaad*], though Dostoevskii's full title was only faithfully restored in 1946. By this time, he had achieved considerable renown within Dutch-speaking countries, and the misleading title could no longer be justified to an audience increasingly familiar with the classics of Russian literature through accessible translations into French and German, as well as through literary criticism that referenced Russian titles, thereby cultivating an expectation for a “correct” title in Dutch.

A comparable process of tempering the overtly seductive function of the first translated title can be observed in Lev Tolstoi's *Resurrection* [*Voskresen'e*]. The first Dutch translation in 1903 rendered it as *Resurrection from Hell* [*De opstanding der hel*], thereby introducing a conceptual embellishment intended to heighten intrigue. This exaggeration, however, was revised as early as 1909 when Tolstoi's original title was restored through a literal translation [*Opstanding*].

A third example comes from a period when Dutch readers were not yet significantly familiar with Dostoevskii and Tolstoi. As a result, translators often employed expressive and persuasive titles to capture readers' interest. In 1902, for instance, Tolstoi's *Two Old Men* [*Dva starika*] was translated as *Two Pilgrims* [*De twee pelgrims*], a title that provided additional clarity by specifying the protagonists' roles as pilgrims, thus appealing to a potentially unfamiliar audience. This intervention persisted until the retranslation of 1979, which finally presented the title in its original form in Dutch *Twee oude mannen*, thereby restoring Tolstoi's intended concept of the “two old men”.

#### *Domestication of Canonical Titles*

Contrary to what might be expected given the canonical reputation of the authors in this subgroup, the corpus includes six instances where the retranslated title is less literal than in its earlier version. Apparently, this was mainly done to enhance the descriptive function of the title, especially when the original title was deemed insufficiently informative for Dutch readers. A case in point is the retranslation of Dostoevskii's *The Player* [*Igrok*]. Initially translated literally in 1929 as *De speler* (the Dutch equivalent of “The Player”), the title was revised in 2008 to *The Gambler* [*De gokker*]. This intervention removed the ambiguity of *speler* in Dutch, where “to play” can be interpreted in different ways (with

“gambling” being only a secondary meaning). The revised title thus clarifies the novel’s theme but severs the connection with a literary title that had already established a degree of recognition within Dutch literary culture.

A less straightforward choice was made in 2003 when Anton Chekhov’s well-known *Uncle Vania* [*Diadia Vania*] was adapted to the more descriptive and suggestive *Uncle: scenes from life in the country* [*Nonkel: scènes uit het leven op het land*]. This adaptation is significantly less recognisable for theatre audiences or readers familiar with Chekhov’s oeuvre. One possible rationale is that this translation was explicitly crafted for stage performance rather than as a “faithful” literary translation. As demonstrated by Aaltonen (2003), theatre translation operates slightly differently from other genres, as a theatre plays may be translated in various radically different ways depending on the target audience. Stage translations allow for a greater degree of “artistic freedom”, including the option to diverge from the established, recognizable references in Chekhov’s original. This is particularly relevant in cases of free adaptation, where the playwright signals through the title that the audience should not expect a faithful rendition of the original text on stage. This (re)translation may therefore exemplify such an adaptation.

#### *Competing Interpretations*

A third category of retranslations resists straightforward classification. Here we are dealing with retranslators who adapt the titles of already canonical works for particular, individual reasons, resulting in choices that do not align clearly with either foreignising or domesticating approach. This approach is often taken by translators who have already established a certain level of renown and can therefore “afford” greater innovation than novice translators might.

A number of those decisions can be understood as attempts to remove elements that might feel “aged” or “dated” to contemporary readers, often by updating words or phrases that may now seem old-fashioned. For instance, when retranslator Arthur Langeveld decided in 2018 to simplify the long-standing yet formal title *Gebroeders Karamazov* (the Dutch equivalent of *Brothers Karamazov* or *Brat’ia Karamazovy* by Dostoevskii, first translated in this form in 1913) to *Broers Karamazov*, he justified this adaptation by pointing to contemporary Dutch usage, in which “gebroeders” has an old-fashioned resonance not present in “broers”. Both “gebroeders” and “broers” are actually correct and literal translations of the Russian original; however, they differ in their level of formality within Dutch. A comparable shift occurred with Dostoevskii’s *Player* in the previous section, where the retranslator deliberately moved “away” from a literal rendering. In this instance, however, the retranslator’s intervention is more subtle, focusing on nuance rather than departure from the original meaning.

Potentially ambiguous concepts and terms in Russian often give rise to divergent translations into Dutch. A prime example of such a term is Dostoevskii’s use of the Russian word *Besy* as the title of his novel about the Russian nihilists in the 19th century, a term open to multiple interpretations and translations. Since 1920, the traditional (and presumably also most “canonical”) Dutch translation has been *Evil ghosts* [*Boze geesten*].

However, in 1950, this title was retranslated as *Demons* [*Demonen*], a choice which preserved the one-word structure of the original title, unlike the earlier translation. In 2008, however, retranslator Hans Boland rejected both previous renderings and introduced a new title, *Devils* [*Duivels*], which he defended in an accompanying essay. These translations can hardly be classified as clear cases of foreignisation or domestication; rather, they reflect the retranslators' personal tastes and preferences, and perhaps the desire to leave a distinct mark on translation history. Future reception analysis will reveal whether one of those titles resonates more strongly with the public. For the less informed reader, the coexistence of these three different titles may, however, lead to some confusion.

The title of a Tolstói novella, *Family happiness* [*Semeinoe schast'e*], underwent particularly intriguing transformations as it was translated into Dutch several times, each in a fundamentally different manner. This moralistic story, which contrasts Tolstói's ideal of true love with the superficiality or vanity ["sueta" in Russian] of society, was first translated into Dutch in 1886. At that time, the title was rendered as *Katia*, named after the main character, but with minimal descriptive value. As was typical of that era, the translation was done through an intermediate French translation, which also bore this adapted title. Shortly thereafter, in 1903, the novella was retranslated twice, probably by retranslators unaware of each other's work. The novella seems to have enjoyed considerable popularity in the West at the beginning of the 20th century, as evidenced by the close succession of these retranslations. One retranslation was titled *The Novel of a Young Woman* [*De roman van eene jonge vrouw*], which, though not literal, better fulfilled the descriptive function than the first translation. The title of the second retranslation took on a more suggestive tone, rendered as *Happiness in the Household* [*Geluk in 't huishouden*]. Adding further complexity, a third retranslation appeared the following year (1904) under yet another title – *Marital Happiness* [*Huwelijksgeluk*], which was closer to the source title but still not a literal translation. It is possible that readers of that period perceived "family" and "marriage" as closely interrelated concepts, making the retranslator's intervention seem less radical than it might today. Given that these translations were produced almost simultaneously, it is difficult to conclude with certainty that they were intended as re-accentuations of competing translations. The retranslators likely did not even know of each other's efforts.

### ***Ideological Influence on Translation of Non-canonical Literary Titles***

The non-canonical part of the corpus includes a wide range of authors who have not (yet) been regarded as significant enough to merit inclusion in the canon of Russian literature, yet, whose works were considered sufficiently interesting and valuable to warrant retranslation into Dutch. While Dostoevskii, Tolstói and Chekhov were (and remain) considered as "essential reading", consistently present in book stores and regularly retranslated (following the adage that "each generation deserves its own Dostoevskii"), authors in this second category are translated and retranslated primarily because publishers perceive their literary output as an opportunity – cultural, and more

often, financial. These authors fall into four distinct groups, and the choice of translation strategy for the titles largely depends on the group to which they belong. The first two groups of authors gained particular popularity in translation and are broadly representative of “lighter” literary genres, i.e., satirical novels and children’s literature. The other two groups occupy a radically different role in the book market, consisting of works about World War II and more politically-oriented works that fall under the general umbrella of “ideological literature”.

In both categories, these literary works were appreciated for their intrinsic value on the Dutch literary market; however, retranslations were often undertaken – despite the non-canonical status of the works – since the existing translations were deemed too “defective” to simply republish. At the same time, retranslation provided publishing houses with an opportunity to reframe the literary work by giving it a new title, crucially, to boost the marketability of the new edition by promoting it as “new”, improved, and less “defective” translation. Multiple motives for retranslation have been identified before, including the release of a new edition or interpretation of the source text, deficiencies in prior (direct or indirect) translations, institutional or ideological shifts in the target culture, the translator’s own preferences or subjectivity, evolving translation norms in response to cultural change, or commercial rivalry within the publishing market (see PEETERS & VAN POUCKE 2023 for a detailed discussion). In this case, the latter motivation seems to play a major role in the decision to retranslate.

#### *Restoring the Original Russian Title*

As with the more canonical Russian authors, many works in the early years of Dutch literary translation received adapted titles that were freely interpreted, often with an enhanced descriptive or seductive function. In this section we observe a predominance of “foreignising” approaches in the retranslations of titles, with 24 of the 37 retranslated titles (or 65%) moving towards a more literal rendering of the source title in comparison with previous translations.

The best-known and most frequently translated author in this category is Maksim Gor’kii, who undoubtedly belongs to the group of ideological writers. In the early phase of his translation history, when he was still relatively unknown to Dutch audiences, adapted titles clearly served commercial goals. For instance, his 1902 play *On the Bottom* [*Na dne*], about the dire living conditions of homeless people in pre-revolutionary Russia spending the night in a night shelter, was translated as *Sleeping Place* [*Slaapstêe*], emphasising the descriptive function of a title. In the 2001 retranslation, however, the Russian title was restored as *Op de bodem*. Similarly, Gor’kii’s *Life of a Useless Man* [*Zhizn’ nenuzhnogo cheloveka*] was first rendered in 1912 as the more intriguing *The Police Spy* [*De politie-spion*], before being literally retranslated [*Het leven van een nutteloos mens*] in 1937 by an overtly “communist” publishing house.

When dealing with non-canonical authors, publishing houses often took significant liberties with titles, particularly in the first half of the 20th century. A notable example is Il’f and Petrov’s *The Golden Calf* [*Zolotoi telënok*], translated in 1933 as *A Millionaire*

in *Soviet Russia* [*Een millionnair in Sovjet-Rusland*], a title that evidently aimed to enhance the work's commercial appeal. The literal source title was eventually restored in the 1994 retranslation. A hybrid solution was employed in the case of Kuprin's *The Pit* [*Iama*], which first appeared in Dutch under the enticing title *The Brothel of Anna Markovna* [*Het bordeel van Anna Marcovna*] (without a specified date). The 1970 retranslation retained this seductive element while also referencing the original: *The Pit. Novel of a Russian Brothel* [*De kuil. Roman van een Russisch bordeel*].

The last example in this section is Simonov's war novel *Days and Nights* [*Dni i nochi*], which was published in Dutch in 1946 under the more explicit title: *Days and Nights in Stalingrad* [*Dagen en nachten in Stalingrad*]. For readers in the immediate post-World War II period, the addition "Stalingrad" – a city frequently mentioned in the preceding years – likely struck a familiar chord, enhancing both the descriptive and seductive functions of the title. In the 1980 retranslation, however, the Stalingrad reference was omitted, as the commercial significance of the city's name had likely diminished four decades after the war.

#### *Traces of Domestication*

Compared with canonical works, domestication of non-canonical works is significantly less common. This may indicate that once a non-canonical literary work has been translated under a title that more or less faithfully reflects the Russian title, this title is seen as established and unlikely to warrant further revision.

The most notable instance of domestication dates back to 1917, when translation norms were still loosely defined vague in Dutch literary culture, allowing a publisher to transform the original title of Artsybashev's novel *Worker Shevyriov* [*Rabochii Shevyrëv*] into *Avenger of Misery* [*Een wreker der ellende*]. This change markedly enhanced the descriptive and seductive functions of the title, while also foregrounding its ideological value by hinting at the novel's content. The fact that this, too, was a communist publisher may explain the choice of an adapted title.

In later years, such clear cases of domestication in titles are almost non-existent, except for one example where the title's poetic function played a key role in altering the title in retranslation. The title of Chukovskii's children's novel *Doctor Aibolit* [*Doktor Aibolit*] includes a playful pun, and Dutch translators have evidently put effort into creating an inventive name for the doctor in Dutch. In Russian the entirely fictional name "Aibolit" implies "Ouch, it hurts", which spurred translators to devise their own original renderings of the name, and hence the title. The first translator opted for the closest possible equivalent, *Dokter Ajtoepijn*, in 1955, which is a very close equivalent of "ouch, it hurts". In 1976, the work was retranslated under the title *Dokter Wattenpijn*, with the even more expressive connotation of "it hurts a lot". However, between those two translations, a first retranslation appeared in 1971 with a softened, even opposite, connotation, as the retranslator rendered the title as *Doctor Doeniepijn* or "it doesn't hurt". Given that this translation was published by a communist publishing house, the question may be asked whether this choice was ideologically motivated. Released in the midst of the Cold War, when each side of the ideological divide strove to project a

positive image to the Other, this choice may have aimed to present the Soviet Union in a favourable light to the Dutch audience. Thus, the Russian doctor in the story would be associated with the alleviation of pain, which could be interpreted as an example of ideological adaptation.

### *Two Special Cases*

The corpus of retranslated titles also contains two specific cases that do not clearly fall into the categories of foreignisation or domestication. The first case is another example of the distribution of Russian war literature in Dutch translation. Leonov's *The Capture of Velikoshumsk* [*Vziatie Velikoshumska*] would have been unfamiliar to Dutch readers, as the place name in the title was virtually unknown to them, which explains the choice of the first translator to rename the novel *The Hour of Retribution* [*Het uur der vergelding*] in 1947, thus enhancing the seductive function of the title. The retranslation by a communist publisher in 1968 retained a similarly evocative quality, reducing the title to the name of a Soviet tank *T34-203*, though any potential ambiguity was mitigated by the inclusion of an image of the tank on the cover, clarifying the link to WW II and indicating the novel's genre. Here, once again, we see the communist publisher's attempt to communicate a central theme from Soviet ideology to Dutch readers through both text and image.

Descriptive and intertextual functions are central in the second case. Solov'ëv's *Troublemaker* [*Vozmutitel' spokoistviia*] was translated into Dutch twice, with publishers clearly opting for eye-catching titles in each instance. In 1948, the prospective reader was drawn in by a reference to a well-known character from Dutch (or Flemish) culture in the first part of the (lengthy and now obsolete) title: *Uilenspiegel Disturbs the Party. The Adventures of Troublemaker Hodzha Nasreddin, in the Noble City of Bokhara* [*Uilenspiegel stoort het feest. De avonturen van de Rustverstoorder Hodzja Nasreddin, in de edele stad Bochara*]. By presenting the Russian protagonist as analogous to the Flemish character Uilenspiegel, the title's seductive function was significantly enhanced. The 1958 retranslation avoided intertextual references, instead opting for a title that informed readers of the book's nature: *Adventures in Bokhara. The Adventures of Troublemaker Hodzha Nasreddin* [*Avonturen in Bochara. De avonturen van de rustverstoorder Hodzja Nasreddin*].

### **Conclusions**

This case study reveals that translators, editors and publishers employed a wide range of strategies for titling retranslated works. In only a third of cases did the retranslators retain the titles chosen by previous translators, indicating that the adaptation of titles in retranslation was a common practice throughout the 20th century and warrants more systematic study.

Contrary to expectations regarding canonical and non-canonical sub-corpora, titles of canonical works appear no more protected from modification than those of non-canonical ones. Considering that the group of canonical authors is smaller than the non-

canonical group, it is striking that the titles of their works were nonetheless frequently changed in retranslation, and not solely for the purpose of foreignisation, i.e., “restoring” the Russian title.

However, a temporal shift is evident in the treatment of canonical works that is absent in the non-canonical sub-corpus. During the initial phase of translation – when these now canonical authors had not yet attained that status – there was a strong emphasis on the work’s market appeal, and the title’s seductive function prevailed. Over the course of the 20th century many of these “distorted” titles were adjusted to more “closely” reflect the original, and these titles often attained canonical status in the Dutch target culture. Recently, however, there appears to be a renewed tendency to question these familiar titles and to prioritise the informative function of a literary title, replacing ambiguous titles with more concrete ones while removing any signs of age from well-established titles.

The diversity of the non-canonical sub-corpus also means that the reasons for changing titles are more diverse. However, in the majority of cases, there is an apparent desire to “restore” titles that were modified to enhance their appeal via the seductive function. In light of evolving translation norms in Dutch culture throughout the 20th century, there is an evident increase in respect for the source text, including the title, which has led to several cases of foreignisation within the corpus.

Conversely, there are also cases where the retranslator’s choices do not align with this pattern and cannot be fully explained by the ten title functions, listed earlier in this article. Politics and ideology offer possible explanations for these cases. The Cold War, which dominated much of the 20th century, fostered an assertive translation policy on both sides of the ideological divide, strongly influencing the works in our study, as the two cultures involved in this research were on opposing sides of the conflict.

The corpus contains several title choices that cannot be explained purely on the basis of the aforementioned functions. One might even question whether ideologically motivated changes might still be considered specific instances of the “appellative function”, targeting readers inclined towards ideologically coloured literature, or whether they instead represent an eleventh function, the “ideological” function, aimed at directing the potential reader of the translated work towards a certain ideological perspective.

Indeed, a substantial proportion of Russian literature translated into Dutch during the 20th century belonged to one of three groups: (1) canonical works, valued across the ideological spectrum and generally seen as above politics, (2) works by dissidents and opponents of the Soviet regime mainly published by right-wing press, and (3) “Socialist realist” works that aimed to promote the Soviet system and were actively disseminated by Moscow-backed publishing houses. According to the (limited) data from this study, works in the third group were most frequently published under adapted titles, with changes typically of an ideological nature.

To sum up, the analysis indicates that titles of canonical works are, indeed, somewhat better protected from manipulation in translation, and that ideologically motivated publishers have often tended to adapt titles to suit their own purposes. However, these

trends are case-specific and other factors come into play, such as the personality of the translator, whose reputation may at times encourage them to create a distinctive “signature” through their title choices, as observed in this corpus. A unique case arises when a work that is not yet canonical is initially given a creative, non-literal title in translation, which then “sticks” in the target culture but later requires adaptation once the source text gains recognition in the target culture, potentially entering the canon of World Literature, only to be retranslated thereafter.

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**Reviews / Rezensionen / Comptes Rendus**

**Amit Kumar Sharma**

Book Review: Christof-Füchsle, Martin, and Razak Khan, eds. *Nodes of Translation: Intellectual History Between Modern India and Germany*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2024.

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**Amit Kumar Sharma**

Christof-Füchsle, Martin & Khan, Razak (eds.) (2024): *Intellectual History Between Modern India and Germany*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. 350 p. 79.95€. ISBN 978-3-11-078713-9

The edited volume *Nodes of Translation: Intellectual History between Modern India and Germany* by Martin Christof-Füchsle and Razak Khan compiles a remarkable collection of scholarly articles that explore the entangled interactions between Indian and German intellectual traditions through the lens of translation. The book contains 13 chapters. This collection emphasises the idea that translation is not merely a linguistic endeavour but a significant cultural and intellectual engagement that shapes and reshapes knowledge and discourses across different epochs and contexts. Its strengths include a comprehensive examination of the intellectual history between both the countries, meticulous attention to detail, and thorough presentation of historical contexts. It also employs scholarly references and direct quotations from primary sources in various chapters, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in translation. The analyses are thought-provoking, offering valuable insights into cultural exchange and intellectual transfer.

Anandita Sharma's article, *Locating the First Hindi Translation of Goethe's Faust (Part One)*, provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis of Bholanath Sharma's Hindi translation of Goethe's *Faust*. She examines this translation within the broader contexts of colonialism, linguistic politics, and cultural entanglements, offering a rich understanding of the complexities involved in translating a canonical work from one cultural context to another. The article emphasizes the translation process as a site of negotiation, resistance, and agency, highlighting the translator's personal intellectual biography and the linguistic ecology of North India. This article contributes to a deeper understanding of the translation process and the role of translation in the standardization and construction of Hindi as a distinct language. Faisal Chaudhry's *Translating Economics Across the German-South Asian Divide: Muhammad Iqbal, Zakir Husain and Intermediating Ideas Across Languages, Paradigms, and Disciplines* delves into the complexities of translating economic ideas across different linguistic and disciplinary boundaries. He provides a detailed analysis of historical ties between India and Germany, focusing on the translation of economic ideas and the interaction between different paradigms and disciplines. This dense and scholarly work requires a deep understanding of economic history, sociology, and linguistic theory. The article's emphasis on the challenges faced by scholars and thinkers in bridging gaps between different intellectual traditions is thought-provoking, offering valuable insights into the development of economic thought in India and Germany. The article *Hermann*

*Gundert: Missions, Malabar, and the Making of Modern Malayalam* explores the life and work of Hermann Gundert, a German missionary and scholar who significantly contributed to the study and modernization of the Malayalam language in Kerala, India. A thorough analysis of Gundert's linguistic and scholarly attempts, contextualizing his work within the broader historical, linguistic, and intellectual landscape of the 19th century is thoroughly discussed. However, the article could benefit from a more critical examination of the potential implications and controversies surrounding missionary activities and colonial influences in linguistic and cultural exchange. A more explicit discussion of the limitations or criticisms of Gundert's work would provide a more well-rounded perspective. Gajendran Ayyathurai's *Germans, Casteless Tamils, and Brahminical Sciolism in Early Colonial South India* offers a comprehensive analysis of interactions between German Lutheran missionaries and Tamil-speaking regions during the early colonial period. Ayyathurai examines the complex dynamics of caste, religion, and colonialism, shedding light on the Eurocentric attitude of Christian missionaries and their incorporation of caste symbolisms. The article highlights the resistance of casteless and anti-caste Tamils against missionary activities, providing valuable insights into the power dynamics and cultural influences during the colonial period. *The Vernacular Führer: Hitler and the Nazi Movement in Tamil Biographies of the 1930s* by Torsten Tschacher analyses two Tamil biographies of Adolf Hitler published in the 1930s. Tschacher examines the motivations and strategies employed by the authors in presenting Hitler and National Socialism to Tamil-speaking audiences, particularly in the context of Indian anti-colonial nationalism. The article effectively demonstrates the complexities of translating and presenting Nazi ideology to a Tamil audience, highlighting the strategic omissions and selective interpretations made by the authors. Mangesh Kulkarni's *Translation and Anticolonial Revivalism: S. R. Rajwade's Appropriation of F. W. Nietzsche* provides an insightful analysis of S. R. Rajwade's translation of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist* into Marathi. Kulkarni navigates through the historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts of colonial Maharashtra, shedding light on the interplay of nationalism, Vedic revivalism, and Hindu nationalism in Rajwade's translation project. The article explores Rajwade's engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy and the concept of "aristocratic radicalism", offering a compelling perspective on the cultural and philosophical crosshatch represented by the Marathi translation. *Translating Marx and Engels: Adhikari, Dange and the Indian Revolution* by Juned Shaikh examines the transmission and translation of Marxist literature in late colonial India. Shaikh provides a detailed analysis of the challenges and significance of acquiring and maintaining Marxist literature, particularly in the face of colonial surveillance. The article explores the complexities of adapting Marxist ideas to local contexts, highlighting the entanglement of Marxism with regional ideas, languages, and hierarchies, particularly the issue of caste in India. Sai Bhatawadekar's *Pu. La. Deshpande's तीन पैशाचा तमाशा (Tīn Paiśācā Tamāśā): Brecht in Marathi* analyzes the Marathi adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Bhatawadekar explores the historical and cultural context that facilitated the adaptation, highlighting the social

and political significance of the play. The article effectively captures the creative and daring aspects of the translation and adaptation process, emphasizing the playful and joyous nature of these endeavours. Julia Hauser's *The Birth of the Ascetic Leader. Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhi in Troubled Weimar Germany* provides a detailed analysis of the historical context and significance of the publication *Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhi* in Weimar Germany. Hauser examines the socio-political climate in Germany during the early 1920s and the motivations of the editors in publishing the volume, offering valuable insights into the broader implications of the publication in German society. Martin Kämpchen's *Tagore in Germany, Austria and Switzerland: Translation, Archives and Histories* meticulously traces the historical, cultural, and intellectual context in which Rabindranath Tagore's works were received in German-speaking countries. Kämpchen's article presents historical facts and delves into the nuances of Tagore's influence on the intellectual and cultural landscape of these countries, providing a valuable resource for understanding the reception of Tagore's works in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. *Expanding Domains: Interactions between Telugu and German Worlds* provides a fascinating account of the interactions between Telugu-speaking regions and German-speaking Europe. The article highlights the experiences and contributions of Dr. Wuppala Lakshmana Rao and Melly Zollinger, offering insights into the dynamic exchanges between the two linguistic and cultural spheres. The article effectively challenges the notion of a homogenous 'West', presenting a nuanced perspective on the diverse relationships between India and specific European contexts. The analysis of publication and censorship practices of modern Indian literature in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from the 1950s to the 1980s delves into the ideological, political, and aesthetic considerations influencing translation decisions. The article provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping the publication of translations from modern Indian languages in the GDR, highlighting the evolving criteria for evaluating literary works. *Reciprocal Translation: From Legibility to Mutual Intelligibility* by Parnal Chirmuley explores the historical and contemporary dynamics of translation between German-speaking Europe and the Indian subcontinent. The article interrogates broader implications of diplomatic engagements within the framework of translation and intercultural communication, emphasizing the responsibilities of translators in navigating complex political landscapes and advocating for mutual understanding. While the article offers valuable insights, it could benefit from a more structured argumentative approach and a deeper exploration of the motivations behind diplomatic gestures.

This anthology delineates the principal characteristics of a unique transnational and transcultural constellation shaped by colonization and postcolonialism. The literary exchanges through translation, initiated in the 18th century, has evolved into a rich tradition of intellectual and cultural interactions. The work illuminates the tangled cultural differences and shared similarities between these two diverse worlds, emphasizing scholarly encounters, exchanges, collaborations, and confrontations that have defined their mutual intellectual histories. It examines paradigm shifts within a

historical framework governing these interactions, providing a retrospective on the development of knowledge at a global level and highlighting the ongoing relevance and future potential of stimulating a symbiotic relationship between linguistically and culturally distinct spaces. Chirmuley also argues that translations are not just located in historical contexts but are also political and remain relevant in the politics of knowledge exchange. This assertion deepens the intense impact of translations on global intellectual history, as they bridge diverse socio-political-ideological contexts. In examining the historical reciprocation of ideas, this volume elucidates how translations have been instrumental in shaping intellectual discourses, strengthening mutual understanding, and navigating the complex aspects of power and ideology. This volume is highly recommended for scholars interested in intellectual history, cultural studies, translation studies, history of philosophy, literary studies, cultural exchange between India and Germany, or anyone interested in exploring the complexities involved in translation as a process.

**Forkus-Rezensionen / Focus Reviews /  
Recensions Focus**

**Renáta Bainé Tóth**

Berk Albachten, Özlem & Gürçağlar Tahir, Şehnaz (eds.)  
(2019/2023): *Perspectives on Retranslation: Ideology, Paratexts, Methods*. New York: Routledge.

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## Renáta Bainé Tóth

Berk Albachten, Özlem & Gürçağlar Tahir, Şehnaz (eds.) (2019/2023): *Perspectives on Retranslation: Ideology, Paratexts, Methods*. New York: Routledge.

This volume contains a detailed discussion of retranslation from various perspectives, including its history, methodology, and approaches. It not only serves as a collection of studies within the field but also includes a point of view that makes it useful to scholars, professionals, and those aspiring to enter the field of translation. The book is divided into four main sections, thus creating a clear and well-structured handbook as well as a series of case studies for the benefit of those interested in the history of retranslation.

The first section focuses on the retranslation of literary works dealing with sensitive topics and exploring how their publication and the impact on translation practices have changed over time. The paper “Retranslating Lorca’s “Ode to Walt Whitman”: From Taboo to Totem” Andrew Samuel Walsh opens the first section of the book. The author overviews how the translation of Lorca’s work has evolved in the English-speaking world since its first version in 1939. By presenting ten different English versions of the intentionally provocative tone of *Ode to Walt Whitman*, Walsh demonstrates the ‘evolution’ of translation in relation to political correctness through a diachronic analysis. His paper not only explores the evolution of the ideological reception of the poem but also provides a rich historical context. His work is followed by Nathalie Ségeral’s paper, “Retranslating D. H. Lawrence in the 21st Century: From Censorship to Marketability,” which discusses two French translations of D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*, comparing the 1932 version by Maurice Rancès and Georges Limbour with the 2000 retranslation by Pierre Vitoux. The author precisely outlines the strengths and weaknesses of both translations and incorporates perspectives from translation theorists such as Vladimir Nabokov and Antoine Berman. “Retranslating in a Censorial Context: H. C. Armstrong’s *Grey Wolf* in Turkish” by Ceyda Özmen brings the first section to a close, focusing on the Turkish retranslations of the English biography of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey. Özmen emphasises that the Turkish translators of *Grey Wolf* regarded their work as a mission and intended to achieve a comprehensive understanding of Atatürk and Kemalism, which led to different interpretations and approaches shaped by the socio-political contexts of their times. These Turkish retranslations were influenced by various forms of censorship, including public censorship enforced by authorities, structural censorship influenced by societal power dynamics, and self-censorship imposed by the translators themselves.

The second section entitled *Paratextual Studies in Retranslation* features two papers: “Repackaging, Retranslation, and Intersemiotic Translation: A Turkish Novel in

Greece” by Arzu Eker-Roditakis and “Extratextual Factors Shaping Preconceptions About Retranslation: Bruno Schulz in English” by Zofia Ziemann. Eker-Roditakis examines the increased intercultural exchange between Greece and Turkey following the political rapprochement in the late 1990s, focusing on the Greek translation of *Güz Sancısı* by Yılmaz Karakoyunlu and its subsequent film adaptation, *Güz Sancısı/Pliges tou Fthinoporou (Pains of Autumn)* by Tomris Giritlioglu. Through her study, the author highlights the significance of intercultural and intersemiotic translation, emphasising how the interaction between translation and film adaptation can shape the way a text is received within a new cultural context. Moving on to Zofia Ziemann’s paper, the author explores how extratextual factors, such as promotional materials, the background of the translators and market positioning influence the reception of the retranslations of Bruno Schulz’s *Cinnamon Shops* by John Curran Davis and Madeline G. Levine in 2016 and 2018, respectively, compared to Wieniewska’s translation from 1963. The paper demonstrates that preconceptions based on these external factors often shape readers’ perceptions of the translations, sometimes even before they read the texts themselves. It also highlights the ethical implications of judging a translation based on these external elements rather than engaging with the translation itself.

The third section, *Toward New Objects, Methods, and Concepts* includes four papers that introduce translation from multiple perspectives. The first paper, “Critical Edition as Retranslation: Mediating ‘Alī Ufuķī’s Notation Collections (c. 1630–1670)” by Judith I. Haug explores musical notations of a 17<sup>th</sup> century Polish-born musician and interpreter of Sultan Mehmed IV. The author compares the Ottoman and European traditions of music explaining that the Western tradition views works of music as fixed entities with notations serving to preserve the composer’s original intent. On the other hand, the Ottoman tradition regards music as a dynamic, evolving entity open to interpretation in each performance. Haug highlights that musical retranslation is not about correcting or improving the source text, but about mediating between the source text, first translation and the target audience. The next study, “Readers and Retranslation: Transformation in Readers’ Habituses in Turkey From the 1930s to the 2010s” written by Müge Işıklar Koçak and Ahu Selin Erkul Yağcı, explores the readers’ perceptions of retranslation and how these perceptions changed over time. To address this broad timespan, the authors present viewpoints from two distinct sources: reader letters published in the magazines *Yedigün* and *Varlık* between 1930 and 1966 and comments and writings from online forums and blogs between 2011 to 2017. The diachronic research by Işıklar Koçak and Erkul Yağcı reveals that Turkish readers have become increasingly critical of earlier translations, whereas the reader letters in *Yedigün* and *Varlık* reflect greater reverence for canonical works and their initial translations. In the paper “Translation Modalities Method in Retranslation Analysis: A Paixão Segundo G. H. in English,” Julieta Widman sets the Translation Modalities Model by Francis H. Aubert as a framework for empirical analysis, and demonstrates its use through English translations of *A Paixao Segundo G. H.* (APSGH) by a Brazilian novelist. Widman’s essay is significant because she not only applies Aubert’s model to the comparison of translations, but also demonstrates how empirical studies reduce subjectivity of the translator. The last paper in this section “Toward

an Empirical Methodology for Identifying Plagiarism in Retranslation” was written by Mehmet Şahin, Derya Duman, Sabri Gürses, Damla Kaleş, and David Woolls. The authors investigate plagiarism in the retranslation of Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* into Turkish through both quantitative and qualitative research. The essay not only addresses textual issues within translations, but also involves economic factors, such as the price disparities between original and plagiarised retranslations, which indicate the commercial motivations behind low-cost publications with low-originality and their impact on the market. The present study can be thought-provoking not only for students and translators, but also for those working in the publishing sector.

The last section entitled *Retranslation History and Bibliographical Studies* comprises two studies. “Retranslation History and Its Contribution to Translation History: The Case of Russian-Dutch Retranslation” by Piet Van Poucke highlights how both literary and political or ideological factors can influence the process of retranslation. The study offers detailed examples of the evolution of retranslation, relying on early cases of Russian works being retranslated into Dutch. As the author believes that his case study is beneficial to researchers, students, and also professionals in both literary and translation studies, he provides critical insights into the retranslation process and its expanded cultural and ideological relevance. The final study in both the section and the volume is written by the editors of the volume, Özlem Berk Albachten and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar. Their chapter entitled “The Making and Reading of a Bibliography of Retranslations” revolves around the question of how translation bibliographies are applied in the historiography of translation. The chapter can be useful for those who would like to deepen their understanding of compiling bibliographies and their role both in academic research and as a broader discipline within book and print history.

To conclude, this book provides readers with a detailed historical context to introduce all the fields in which translation may occur. Carefully selected texts, divided into thematic sections ensure that everyone can find their field of interest in translation. The present work is likely to be highly beneficial not only for scholars but also for those interested in translation, as well as for those interested in a detailed diachronic study of the history of translation in Europe and beyond.

**Lilla Kárpáti**

Gulyás, Adrienn & Mudriczki, Judit & Sepsi, Enikő & Horváth, Géza (eds.) (2021): *Klasszikus művek újrafordítása*. Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, L'Harmattan Kiadó.

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## Lilla Edit Kárpáti

Gulyás, Adrienn; Mudriczki, Judit; Sepsi, Enikő & Horváth, Géza (eds.) (2021): *Klasszikus művek újrafordítása*. Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem – L'Harmattan Kiadó.

As the slogan in the 2024 video campaign of The Hungarian Association of Literary Translators states, “[a] szerző ismert, a fordító láthatatlan” (the author is known, the translator is invisible).<sup>1</sup> The Association makes a clear allusion to Lawrence Venuti’s widely discussed theory of the invisibility of the translator<sup>2</sup> so as to bring the translator’s figure to the forefront of cultural awareness. The volume entitled *Klasszikus művek újrafordítása* (The Retranslation of Canonical Works) edited by Adrienn Gulyás, Judit Mudriczki, Enikő Sepsi and Géza Horváth aligns well into contemporary aspirations to “demystify” (c.f. VENUTI 1995) the translation process by providing an extensive look into the Hungarian literary (re)translation practice and theory. Canonical works of English, Russian, German, and French origin appear in the focus of its chapters demonstrating the lively richness of Hungarian literary culture. Indeed, as several authors in the volume, e.g. László Márton and András Kappanyos, point out, retranslation can be seen as a testimony of a work’s liveliness, which Massardier-Kenney calls the “success of translation [...] [as it] provide[s] a space in the receiving culture and language” (2015:78) to the foreign language originals. Therefore, the volume is not merely an inspiring collection of expert knowledge but a dedicated “creed” of translation as well.

The book presents the results of two professional events organised by a research group interested in translation and intercultural studies at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary on 16 November 2018 and 4 December 2019. Structurally, it is divided into four sections preceded by the editors’ foreword, and it ends with a chapter introducing the authors of the volume. The four sections guide the reader through a substantial segment of literary history and its related questions of (re)translation in the following chronological order: 1) Canonical works from Medieval and Renaissance Europe in Retranslation; 2) European Classics from the Age of Enlightenment until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Retranslation; 3) 20<sup>th</sup> Century European and American Prose in Retranslation; and 4) The Theory and Practice of Translation and

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<sup>1</sup> All translations in this book review from Hungarian into English are mine. The video campaign “Főszerepben a fordító” is available on You Tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8dPjDHVokY&list=PLA9BLeTEFUR8pdQghP-PlsupkwTmI-UEo1>.

<sup>2</sup> VENUTI, Lawrence (1995): *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London – New York: Routledge.

Retranslation Today. The contributions are of various genres: essays, treatises, workshop diaries, transcriptions of roundtable discussions, and even a book review can be found among the titles.

The first section offers four chapters on retranslations of Medieval and Renaissance literature. Andrea Nagy, who co-translated *Beowulf* with Ágnes Kata Miklós, introduces the challenges translators of Old English poetry and specifically of *Beowulf* face when examining the unique alliterative poetry and language use of its own time, highlighting the need of extensive familiarity with scholarship written on this topic. Nagy's further emphasis on the ambiguity of words might be considered the most intriguing part of the reading as it frames *Beowulf*'s translations as a fascinating study material, which represent *together* the complex richness of the Old English poem. In the second chapter, László Márton shares his views on *The Nibelungenlied* and presents the retranslation process as a dialogue with the author and a debate with previous translators. In the 19th century, Károly Szász, the former translator, Márton supposes, possibly wished to pair the poetry of János Arany, the most prestigious and influential poet in his time, with the Nibelung tradition while translating the poem. Whereas Márton aimed to highlight the intentions of the anonymous German poet to revitalise the work in the 21st century, while confronting ambiguity, the questions of poetic form, logical "mistakes" and a sometimes homodiegetic narrator. Thirdly, Adrienn Gulyás offers an enjoyable chapter discussing the Hungarian translations of Rabelais's *Gargantua*. By concentrating on the humour and obscenities in the novel, Gulyás points out the previous translators' bashful approach in censoring or euphemising the said features through which they essentially deprived both the work and the author of their indispensable characteristics. In addition, Gulyás also provides interesting comparisons between the translations highlighting the nuanced importance of portraying lower bodily functions. The last chapter in this section focuses on yet another genre, Shakespeare's Renaissance drama, with Ádám Nádasdy, a highly renowned Hungarian (re)translator and linguist, discussing addition and omission in his own Shakespeare translations. Nádasdy argues that in faithfulness to Shakespeare's originals, the translator should not merely concentrate on the content and length of lines but on their dramatic effect as well. The categories reviewed by the translator include rhyming, humour, and syntactic clarifications, but he also emphasises the length of words on which Shakespeare likely built his texts.

The second and lengthiest part of the volume consists of five chapters from both translators and critics of post-Enlightenment literature and philosophy. András Fáber offers a highly detailed overview of Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux, marivaudage style and theatre even to unfamiliar readers, however, leaves relatively short space for the discussion of the challenges he faced while translating the *La Nouvelle Colonie* into Hungarian. He recollects that he had to let go of portraying the societal differences between the characters to put enough emphasis on the work's feminist motif. Ultimately, the chapter works as a translatory argument for the contemporary value of Marivaux's plays. The next chapter by Veronika Ruttkay is very impressive, although it does not specifically focus on retranslation but delineates manifold issues topical in the study of translation: the question of untranslatability, the history of comparative

literature, the cultural significance of folk poetry, the flower-seed simile of translation, and commerce between nations. Her paper discusses the poem “To a Mountain Daisy” by Robert Burns, and thereby lists relative flower motives in Hungarian literature arguing for the possibility of translation. Géza Horváth guides the reader into the world of German philosophy in the third chapter, which reviews his retranslation of, and thus claims contemporary value to, the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is exceptionally enjoyable to read about the indivisibility of language and Nietzsche’s philosophy, which asks a similar inventiveness from the translator as that of the author. Horváth also stresses the importance of transmitting style and tempo of a language in translation with a quote from *Beyond Good and Evil*. The fourth chapter is an interesting “odd one out” in the collection as Zsuzsa Csikai departs from Hungarian practices of retranslation and analyses the Irish dialectal translations of Chekhov’s *The Seagull*. Nevertheless, her words pose translation as a phenomenon that can transform and establish culture because the first Irish dialectal translation of the drama can be seen as the foundation of Irish national theatre. The unique directorial concepts of later translations testify to the impact of politics on theatre while also contrast foreignizing and domesticating approaches. The fifth chapter, written by Péter Ádám and Sándor Albert offers a portrait of Endre Illés, who was the director of the Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, one of the most dominant publishing houses before the end of the Communist regime in Hungary. The characterisation is exceptionally negative, which is strengthened by the authors’ detailed analysis of a characteristic paragraph from Illés’ insensitive, mistaken and stylistically wrong retranslation of Stendhal’s *The Red and the Black*.

The third part enters the 20<sup>th</sup> century with its four chapters and explores the notion of canonical status. In the first chapter, Dávid Szabó as an editor praises Ildikó Lőrinszky’s Hungarian retranslation of *Elles se rendent pas compte*, a 1974 novel written by Boris Vian and lists the reasons why the publishing house thought it necessary to retranslate this less significant novel. Therefore, it is not merely the decisions for retranslation that Szabó explores in his paper, but the exclusivity of the works that are deemed canonical. Among his arguments comes up the context of further retranslations and the stylistic mistakes in the previous translation. Kornélia Kiss offers a workshop diary as the second chapter of the section, dealing with the retranslation of Camus’s *The Stranger*, which she made with Péter Ádám. In this way, her contribution highlights the various advantages of “four-handed translation” (165) while also dismissing the notion or existence of timeless translations; retranslation, she argues, helps readers to remain connected to the given works and therefore, are necessary. At the end of her paper, she also includes a bibliography of reviews written on their translation. In the third chapter, Enikő Bollobás focuses on the highly controversial retranslation of Sallinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* by Imre Barna in 2018. Interestingly, Bollobás’s chapter characterises both the original and the first translation by Judit Gyepes from 1964 as a cultic work in their own linguistic context, moreover, refreshingly praises both translations. Even though her words resound more critical towards Barna’s literal title, she argues his translation is much livelier than Gyepes’s. In the last chapter of this section, Anikó Sohár enters the world of science-fiction with her thorough analysis of the sole

Hungarian translation of Isaac Asimov's short story collection, *I, Robot*. Sohár explores the Communist regime's impact on literary culture and the role of translation in domesticating a new literary genre. In addition, the author highlights the canonised status of Pál Vámosi's translation and its connection to the preferences of Hungarian readers for stylised, domesticated translations. At the end of her paper, she also provides a list of the numerous publications of the short stories and voices the pressing need for re-translation.

The fourth and last part of the book, which consists of five chapters, generalises its focus of retranslation to entail the translation of contemporary works as well. András Kappanyos's theoretical first chapter recounts translatory choices of register throughout history and voices the impact of the possibly changing prestige of such canonical works of European literature as *Hamlet*, *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Divine Comedy*. The author makes a contrast between virtuoso and domesticating, fluent translations and connects these types to the work's current prestige, however, stresses that translatory approaches change through time. Currently, he suggests, foreignizing translation prevails due to the widespread availability of information. The second chapter offers the transcription of a roundtable discussion on drama translation led by Enikő Sepsi between András Kozma, Zsolt Pacskovszky and Zsófia Rideg, dramaturges and translators. The conversation touches upon various French and Russian, older as well as contemporary plays stressing the difference of translating to stage and spoken language. Furthermore, new directorial concepts and approaches are recognised as a decisive basis for new translations. The participants also talk about the authorial tendency to write plays on given actors, and thus, highlight the importance of collaborating with actors in the finalisation of a given translation. Judit Mudriczki's third chapter presents the reader with an intriguing look into audiovisual (re)translation by analysing the Hungarian dubbings of four film adaptations of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Mudriczki's thorough investigation of language use in both the English and the Hungarian versions frames the role of Lőrinc Szabó's translation in our contemporary Hungarian context as an equal to Shakespeare's original in English speaking countries. In other words, the conservative approach in audiovisual translation testify to the canonisation of the 1938 Hungarian translation by Szabó. The fourth chapter written by Johanna Domokos is exceptional in this volume as it reviews a German-language anthology of contemporary Hungarian poetry, *Dies wird die Hypnose des Jahrhunderts* edited by Orsolya Kalász and Peter Holland. As the author does not specifically deal with retranslation of canonical authors, this is the point where the book's section generalises. Domokos understands the process of translation as reenactment, a term borrowed from theatre studies, that revitalises the given literary work and thereby the recipient (literary) culture. Her suggestion appears quite palpably in the closing image of the hypnotic phoenix. In her appendices, Domokos provides an extensive list of Hungarian literature published in German. The last chapter contains the transcript of the second roundtable discussion, in which Enikő Sepsi conversed with Attila Jász, László Kúnos, Dániel Levente Pál and Vera Tönkö, editors and publishing professionals. This chapter offers an interesting look into the workings of publishing houses regarding the choice

of new authors and volumes for translation in Hungary today. The participants highlight the impact of PR marketing and word-of-mouth recommendations both in the choice and the sale of books, besides stressing the need for a widely read Hungarian platform for professional reviews. The closure of the chapter introduces a grant system that could support translators, and touch upon the distribution of Hungarian literature into foreign countries.

Altogether, *Klasszikus művek újrafordítása* is an enjoyable, well-edited, thought-provoking reading. I highly recommend it to everyone interested in the study of (re)translations in Hungary. As literature is an ever-growing winged creature, whom our translators continually revitalise into a visible phoenix, it is a great honour to read these analyses written by Hungarian scholars and retranslators.

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**Bíborka Radványi**

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## Bíborka Radványi

Headley, Maria Dahvana (2020): *Beowulf: A New Translation*. New York: MCD x FSG Originals.

Maria Dahvana Headley's translation of *Beowulf* interprets the ancient epic through modern eyes, and presents it to the readers in the same modern, fresh, and, as the translator herself described it, even a bit satirical manner (11). The poem itself has been translated many times into Modern English both by authors focusing on the literary nature of the text, such as Seamus Heaney or J. R. R. Tolkien, and translators concentrating on the scholarly aspects of the text, such as R. M. Liuzza or R.D. Fulk. Headley's rendition of *Beowulf* aims to be radically different from previous translations.

While *Beowulf* in past translations appeared as a rather exalted, tragic story with a hero who is, in many ways, an exemplary warrior, Headley's protagonist embraces a boastful nature rooted in 21<sup>st</sup> century attitudes: his boasts seem more like manifestations of an aggressive, bragging masculinity, as opposed to the Old English boasts that were closer to promises of great deeds, due to the style given to *Beowulf*. When talking about his undertaking to kill Grendel, *Beowulf* says the following words: "Now, I want to test my mettle on Grendel, best him,/a match from man into meat. Just us two,/hand to hand. Sweet." (HEADLEY 2020: 21). While the speech still promises to deal with Grendel, the way in which it is formulated shifts the focus to *Beowulf*'s arrogance. This *Beowulf* has his own set of faults, some of which are rooted in his pride; however, he eventually faces the same, or at least similar struggles with which the *Beowulf* of previous translations had to cope.

One of the peculiarities of Headley's translation of *Beowulf* is the language, or rather the sociolect she uses. On the one hand, battle scenes and tragedies are described in a pulsating, beautiful, untamed manner; on the other hand, the language of the narrator, and sometimes even that of the dialogues, is often fraught with slang phrases and expressions of familiarity, which frame the setting in a different way than previous translations or even the original text. Headley's *Beowulf*, for example, is not afraid to state plainly that "Anyone who fucks with the Geats? Bro, they have to fuck with me." (HEADLEY 2020: 21), and the narrator also uses the invocation "bro" not only to draw the audience's attention to a certain plot point, but also to start the poem. It is, however, important to note that the translation of the starting word of the poem, *hwæt*, is not evident. Whereas the word itself might simply mean "what" or serve as an interjection, translators have come up with different solutions: in Tolkien's rendition (2014), it is translated to "lo!" (13), Heaney (1999) translated it to the more colloquial "so" (3). In this respect, Headley's choice to translate *hwæt* to "bro" is peculiar because

of its slang-based nature, but it also corresponds to Tolkien's method: while Tolkien's whole translation is archaic, Headley's rendition has an informal style. Moreover, Headley's decision to present Beowulf's story in a way that differs from the original in terms of style or choice of words, is not entirely unprecedented: Tolkien (2014), for example, used the term "knight" to describe the warriors of the hall (13), even though the story evidently predates the role and ideals of knighthood. While Tolkien's choice of words might shift the focus to the ideal-like nature of Beowulf as a hero, Headley's decision to use the tone of familiarity and informality paints a more "interactive" scene than the previous translations: the reader can easily imagine that this story is being told to them in the very present by a storyteller who makes themselves be seen by addressing the audience, or, in some cases, by including swearing and profane phrases in dialogues to express the tension between two characters. Moreover, Headley's use of colloquial forms removes the linguistic burdens placed on the plot by previous translations that often present the story in a more serious and elevated manner through the use of archaic, complicated forms, which might cause difficulties in interpretation and create a barrier between the story and the audience, hindering engagement. Headley's way of storytelling, however, creates an air of immediacy and intimacy, which are in close relation to Beowulf's possible origins as a piece of oral literature, and preserve the atmosphere of the original.

This feeling of immediacy and the traces of oral tradition are easily spotted in the form in which Headley presents the poem. The form diverges from that of the Old English. In Old English poems, there is no rhyme, and the cohesive element is the alliteration of certain stressed words in a line, hence the name "alliterative meter". Lines are divided into two half-lines, both of which usually contain two stressed words, and the first stressed words in both half lines are supposed to alliterate. Headley's translation diverges from the Old English verse forms in more ways: firstly, she does not divide lines into half-lines, and secondly, while alliteration does appear in the text, it is used as a decorative, not a cohesive element. Moreover, the text also includes in-line rhymes and enjambment together with the alliteration, which create the illusion of speech, see for example: "We've suffered years/of hall-harvesting here, but hard times are done/at last. God is good. Grendel is gone." (HEADLEY 2020: 42). In this way, Headley manages to pay respect to the original form and create a modern flow and pleasant rhythm to the translation. This style allows readers to entirely immerse themselves into the atmosphere of listening to a story.

Apart from creating a very strong atmosphere, Headley also introduces a new perspective into her translation: feminism. Headley herself positions the translation as a feminist one, but this feminist approach, in most cases, does not appear as invasive in the text, since Old English poetry in general allows the existence of strong female figures, see e.g. Judith or Elene. Furthermore, Headley can only expand the presentation of women in positions of power in her translation because *Beowulf* already includes a number of queens that influence or try to influence the events, thus their presence and roles are inherently organic to the story. Headley takes care to protect the agency and personality of the female characters that appear in the poem,

and presents them in just as lively and remarkable manner as she presents the male characters. Wealhtheow in her translation becomes a woman who wields the softer tools of manipulation elegantly and efficiently, Freawaru's tragedy becomes more attainable and more imminent, and Hygd's worry for her son also gains its own spotlight. Most importantly, however, Headley decided to paint a more sympathetic portrait of Grendel's mother, creating an image of her that corresponds to a number of feminist readings of *Beowulf*: that Grendel's mother is more than a simple monster; she is a vengeful warrior seeking retribution for the murder of her son, or even the antitype of the feminine ideal (see e.g. Hennequin, Chance or Dockray-Miller).

In the introduction to the translation, Headley mentions the Old-English word *ægléca* and its feminine form, *aglæcwif*, the meaning of which is ambiguous. In most translations of *Beowulf*, it is used as a positive word when describing Beowulf himself, and as a negative one, when it refers to Grendel's mother. The greatest difference appears in Heaney's translation. He (1999) translates *aglæcwif* as "monstrous hell-bride" (42), but *ægléca* becomes "fierce contender" when it applies to Beowulf and the dragon (15). Tolkien's translation (2014) shows a smaller difference, yet the monstrosity of Grendel's mother is emphasized by him as well: *aglæcwif* is translated as "ogress, fierce destroyer" (49), while he uses the expression "fierce slayer" (88) in other situations. Headley (2020) decided to diminish this discrepancy: Grendel's mother is described as a "warrior-woman, outlaw" (56), and the word *ægléca* is simply translated as "the two" when it depicts the fight of Beowulf and the dragon (111).<sup>1</sup> While this sympathetic translation of Grendel's mother might appear as a stretch in the light of previous translations of *Beowulf*, it is important to state that the justifiability of her motives and her status as a monster are questions that seem to appear both in the original text and in scholarly discussions. Dockray-Miller (2000) emphasizes Grendel's mother's utter devotion to his son (89), and Hennequin (2008), for example, argues that while Grendel's mother crosses Old English gender boundaries, she is not portrayed as a monster or a villain (504), as opposed to Acker (2006), who proposes that the male-coded behaviour of Grendel's mother only enhances her monstrosity in the face of her gender (705). Chance (1986) proposes that while Grendel's mother recreates the monstrosity of his son by attacking Heorot, she is also a lady; a retainer of her own hall, thus plays a dual role (97). It is thus important to note that while arguments against the representation of Grendel's mother as an avenger with justifiable motives might be raised, showing her in such light brings a new and supportable understanding to *Beowulf* translations.

Another great quality of Headley's translation is the introduction of humour and irony into the text. While it is impossible to guess which parts, if any, were meant to be understood as humorous by an Old English audience, the episode in which Unferth questions Beowulf's heroism and abilities and Beowulf's response does seem to contain some deep-seated irony which excellently appears in this rendition of the story

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, when the word *ægléca* describes Grendel, only Tolkien keeps a rather neutral tone by translating it to "fierce slayer" (2014: 25), while Heaney chooses "monster" (1999: 15), and Headley decides on "pest" (2020: 21).

(Headley 2020, 24–28). Irony, for example, already shines in Beowulf's reply, when he addresses Unferth as "*buddy*", italics by the translator (25). This satirical nature often reemerges when Unferth takes the stage. Unferth himself appears as a lowly, unheroic, cowardly fellow; a comic relief compared to the competent Beowulf. His previous testing of Beowulf is later contextualized as "Note: the stone-bold son of Ecglaf had been blackout drunk when he said that stuff he'd said" (HEADLEY 2020: 64). This light-hearted layer ties into the immediacy of the presentation, and allows the audience to engage with the poem not only as a distanced heroic tragedy, but also as a more human, more accessible story.

A quite peculiar characteristic of the translation is that, due to the use of modern slang, the text might be viewed as "exclusive" in the sense that it is only to be fully experienced by the generation that uses these slang expressions and possesses the language of Headley's Beowulf. In this manner, the text speaks directly to its implied audience and removes the linguistic impediments between the poem, or the narrator, and the readers, while creating a linguistic distance from those who would expect and accept a more traditional, more archaic rendition. Because of this, members of the audience can easily feel like they really belong to the circle whom this story addresses. This exclusivity, however, is also one of the long-term disadvantages of the translation. Since slang and phrases of informal language use change fast, the text might age sooner than other translations. Moreover, the slang and swearing-packed phrasing might repel many readers who would expect the story to appear in the rather serious form the original presents.

Apart from the merits of the translation, it does have some disadvantages as well, which, in most cases, are related to the lack of nuances mentioned in connection with the characterization of Grendel's mother, which often narrows down the way the poem can be interpreted. As mentioned above, Grendel's mother appears as a valiant warrior with a justifiable cause, while the original poem leaves the validity of her motives up to interpretation. On the one hand, she is trying to take revenge for her son, on the other hand, Grendel's actions play a crucial part in his expulsion from human society, thus violence against him cannot be subjected to the same legal criteria as the murder of law-abiding warriors, which might make the revenge of his mother unjustified. This issue, however, is not evident in translation. Instead of stating Grendel's guilt in terms of the massacres, Headley (2020) states that "Beowulf tore [...] and bore [Grendel]/into afterlife, never mind years of his own crime" (59), and even shows Hrothgar blaming Beowulf for the attacks of Grendel's mother when discussing the situation with him: "This is on you. She threw/herself into a blood feud after you slew her son" (59). In a similar fashion, the character of Modthryth is also somewhat simplified, as she appears rather as someone looked down on before her marriage, while Sebo and Schilling, for example, argue that the Old English text itself is ambiguous about her portrayal, and she can have more sympathetic readings, making her more of a "success story" both from a story-centred and feminist perspective, especially if compared to other brides in Beowulf, such as Hildeburh or Freawaru, see

Sebo and Schilling's article "Modthryth and the Problem of Peace-Weavers: Women and Political Power in Early Medieval England" (2021).

The dragon's presentation as a female character can also feel like an unnecessary addition, or even one that harms the understanding. Originally, Beowulf fights a male and a female being, and a force of nature that he, even as the greatest hero, cannot overcome without a high price. Moreover, in the original text, the dragon appears as male: male pronouns are used in his descriptions (see e.g. line 2828). In Headley's translation, however, the dragon's femininity might create confusion in the interpretation of the dragon: in this way, Beowulf faces two female figures protecting their home and taking vengeance for the disturbance of it, which might lead to conclusions not inherent to the original poem.

In the same vein, while the introduction of humour does make the text livelier, the presentation of Unferth rules out other possible roles he might play in the political matrix of the story apart from that of the "comic relief". Certain interpretations, such as Eliason's (1963), suggest that Unferth's questioning of Beowulf serves as a way of entertainment; no more than the interaction of a guest and a jester (271). Moreover, Fulk (1987) comments that the text implies that Unferth's challenge was, in fact, serious, and not just an act of folly, and that Unferth himself might possess strength comparable to Beowulf (116). Beowulf's presented attitude towards Unferth in Headley's translation, however, diminishes Unferth's importance and the idea that Beowulf had to seriously consider the challenge of a Danish warrior before he was truly accepted as the possible slayer of Grendel.

In addition, while both the male and the female characters have their own personality and voice in Headley's translation, it appears as if a shift had been made to emphasize the individual rather than the community. This feature affects the male characters the most, since, as opposed to the women who usually appear among men without a female connection on which rely, men appear among themselves, and their relationships, the importance of mutuality in aid and their reliance on each other is an important aspect of the poem. In the Old English era, social ties had a significant role, and the relationship between lords and thanes was one of mutual aid: the lord gave riches to the warriors, who, in turn, served him loyally, and provided assistance even well into the lord's old age or at the time of his imminent death. Since Headley's translation does not focus on social ties, Beowulf's aging is presented as an unresolved and unresolvable tragedy, since he cannot fight the dragon on his own terms due to his age, while the tragedy of him not being aided by all the younger warriors is reduced. In the original text, however, it is implied that the effects of age might be alleviated through one's actions towards the younger members of a tribe: the young Beowulf's heroism helps the old Hrothgar, and the young Wiglaf's courage gives enough ferocity to the old Beowulf to slay the dragon. Sutton (2007), for example, proposes that Wiglaf in this fight plays the role of a helper: through his inspiring words and actions, Beowulf finds the strength to fight back, and achieves a heroic death as a result (53). This, while the losses caused by old age are evidently present in the original as well, it also proposes a way in which these losses might be minimized and the fame of a warrior might be protected from its effects.

A similar ambiguity appears in the language and the tone of the text, too. While Headley uses modern, colloquial and informal phrases that make the reading experience easier, she also incorporates the Old English tradition of using kennings into the text. Kennings in Old English are compound phrases that carry a metaphorical meaning, e.g. “battle sweat” [heaðuswat] is the kenning for blood. On the one hand, the use of this device preserves an Old English poetic tradition, yet on the other hand, kennings make the otherwise easy-to-follow text more of a challenge, which the readers might not be expecting in the lack of archaic expressions and complicated forms.

In conclusion, Headley’s translation of *Beowulf* paints a fresh, bewildering and often surprising image of the epic. It is tuned to the needs of a very specific audience, and manages to create an interaction-filled, close and exclusive atmosphere in which the readers can feel at ease without being burdened by the overcomplicated and archaic phrasing of previous translations. While the translation does limit the ways in which the text might be understood, it provides a new angle for interpretation; one that can be supported by the Old English text and which allows newer readings to reach a wider audience.

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