

Introduction

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When retranslation first became a research interest for me in the 1990s, I was working on translations and retranslations of a few classics by a government publisher and private publishing companies. I knew I had an interesting corpus and was onto something bigger than just capturing stylistic shifts and diverging translation strategies in the various translations of these works. Close scrutiny of the retranslations revealed differences and common patterns that were indicative of the dynamics of the socio-political context of the culture I was studying—which was Turkey in the 1920s-1960s. Meanwhile, there were only a handful of scholarly publications that tackled retranslation from a conceptual perspective. Fortunately, this was to change in the decades that followed and the surge of interest in retranslation enabled a much broader outlook. While early work (see articles in Bensimon and Coupaye, especially Berman) mostly focused on the source author and literature as the engines behind retranslation, cultural and sociological approaches quickly shifted the focus towards the target culture and target readers, as well as the target context that trigger retranslated works. Today, retranslation is a burgeoning field and the potentials it offers for understanding the sociological and ideological drivers of translation have become much clearer. Although Antoine Berman's ideas on retranslation (Berman) have led to an initial conceptualization of retranslation as linear progress, leading to an “entire critical discourse on retranslations as expressing a default, a deficiency, or decaying of first translations” (Massardier-Kenney 74), this view has been largely refuted by subsequent studies that point out the complexity and multiple causation behind retranslation (Venuti; Brownlie; Koskinen and Paloposki; Deane-Cox). Those who need a closer insight into the evolution of ideas on retranslation during the past three decades may benefit from numerous studies that offer critical overviews (cf. Alvstad and Assis Rosa; Massardier-Kenney; Koskinen and Paloposki; Tahir Gürçağlar).

Nowadays, retranslation is a popular topic within translation studies, and it features strongly in translation history, textual analyses of translation series, and multimodal translation as the studies in this special issue demonstrate. There is an international conference series devoted to retranslation titled “Retranslation in Context” (held in Istanbul in 2013 and 2015, in Ghent in 2017, in Madrid in 2019 and a conference planned to take place in Budapest in 2021). After the pivotal special issue of *Palimpsestes* on retranslation (Bensimon and Coupaye) that served as a launch pad for much future thinking on retranslation, there have been various special issues of journals focused on retranslation, increasing in number and frequency (Milton and Catherine Torres; Alvstad and Assis Rosa; Dore; Van Poucke and Sanz Gallego; Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar *The Translator*), monographs (O'Driscoll; Pokorn; Deane-Cox; Courtois; Walsh), and edited volumes (Kahn and Seth; Monti and Schnyder; Létot-Douglas and Cabaret; Cadera and Walsh; Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar *Perspectives and Studies*). Retranslation is included as a separate entry in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Tahir Gürçağlar), the *Routledge Handbook of Literary*

Translation (Koskinen) and the *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Koskinen and Paloposki). Digital humanities have also found their way into research on retranslation and digital tools are being developed to trace retranslations (Şahin, Duman and Gürses; Cheesman et. al; Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar “The Making and Reading”).

As the richness and complexity of the field of retranslation became gradually more evident, studies started to grow and diversify in scope, both in terms of their content and the methodologies employed. This special issue includes studies that explore several themes that remain understudied in contextualizing retranslations and exploring their interrelationships, in addition to their links to their source texts and initial translations. The range of the studies in the present issue is broad and covers such topics as the effect of previous translation(s) on subsequent retranslations, the creation and recreation of images of authors and works through retranslation, paratextual features of retranslated sacred texts, retranslations of gay literature and retranslation as reframing and rewriting. Although some of the articles employ comparative translation analysis, their primary goal is the exploration of how retranslations are presented to the world and how they are received, which is key to understanding how retranslations are a part of social change and shifting (self) images of source and target cultures. To this end, the essays in this issue place strong emphasis on the agency of (re)translators and how they create difference through their discourse and translational choices. Rather than setting out to confirm or refute the so-called progress-based “retranslation hypothesis” (Koskinen and Paloposki), the studies reveal the multifariousness and mutability of retranslation. They do this both by carrying out a careful analysis of how textual features of retranslations differ both from each other and initial translations, and also by delving into the contextual factors that create specific paratextual and discursive frameworks for the production and reading of retranslated works.

In the opening article to the special issue, Piet Van Poucke offers a mixed methodology for analyzing the “effect” of previous translations on a particular retranslation. He carries out a comparative analysis of four sets of retranslations of literary works from Russian into Dutch and traces the overlaps in lexical, syntactical and stylistic choices among retranslations of the same work, specifically problematizing the borders between retranslation and revision and ageing as a motive for retranslations. A unique aspect of Van Poucke’s essay is the way he adds a “control” group of two retranslations published in the same year, which he terms “parallel retranslations” to his study. This enables him to gauge whether the overlaps in retranslations separated by time are quantitatively and qualitatively different from parallel retranslations, which cannot have been influenced by each other in any way, since both were published synchronously without the translators being aware of each other’s efforts. His findings indicate that for the specific corpus that he has examined, lexical diversity is not altered by retranslators to a great extent. However, retranslators use the same building blocks to create a new narrative through their syntactic and stylistic choices. Van Poucke notes that his findings need to be verified across other genres and cultures.

In her article, Samira Saeedi adopts a sociological approach to exploring the discourse around retranslation as a concept and practice in Iran today. She focuses on the retranslations of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, a work that saw over a hundred retranslations in Iran during the past four

decades, as a case in point as she investigates the motives and contexts of literary retranslation in the country. Saeedi analyses the discourse of the translators and publishers based on the data she collected during her interviews with ten translators and six publishers in Tehran. Her agency-based study engages with the relevance of the professional status of translators and separates her informants into groups of amateur, early-career, mid-career and senior translators, a categorization that is reflective of a certain shift of behaviour among these groups towards retranslation. The interviews have enabled Saeedi to explore the operations of the publishing market in terms of commissioning translators and the incentives for retranslation, as well as the diversity of views among translators on retranslation, ranging from retranslation as a profitable activity to retranslation as a process of reinforcing trust in professionalism.

Hua Tan has carried out a study on paratexts of the Chinese translations of *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* by Thomas H. Huxley and investigated the shifting motives and intended functions of retranslation in China in over a century by tracing the discourses crystalizing in the paratexts, including translator's notes, commentary, preface, and visual material. He reveals how the different social and political backgrounds to the translations and China's changing cultural landscape have affected the main goals of the translators and publishers vis-a-vis the dissemination of science and knowledge in the society. Tan argues that the paratexts of the initial translation by the prolific writer and translator Yan Fu positioned the work within a social reform agenda in a period when China was struggling with political instability, poverty and illiteracy. The retranslations, however, contextualized the work within the larger body of western scientific knowledge and their paratexts appeared to address the need to facilitate the dissemination of scientific knowledge among readers in the country, a change that indicates the changing political and intellectual dynamics in China.

Sema Üstün Külünk tackles a subject that has largely been overlooked in the field of retranslation, namely the retranslations of the Qur'an. She focuses on the paratextual elements of an extensive corpus of Turkish translations presented and marketed under various titles and carries out a quantitative analysis of the translations as well as a qualitative paratextual analysis of their covers and prefaces. Üstün Külünk offers a numeric analysis of Qur'an translations published in Turkey in 1923-2019, with a chronological overview of the varying trends in their publication and naming. She reveals that throughout the decades, both the numbers of translations and the designations/titles of the renderings have diversified. She associates the trends in the translations with the changing social, ideological, and cultural context in Turkey. As a result of her paratextual analysis, the author identifies a meta-narrative specifically surfacing in the prefaces of the respective translations, problematizing the translatability of the Qur'an and laying bare the diverging motivations of the translators and publishers.

Marie-Christine Aubin focuses on the retranslations and adaptations of Balzac's works and regards them as extensions of Balzac's aura in new cultures and societies. Focusing on the hierarchical, linguistic and situational constraints governing the retranslations/adaptations of Balzac's works in various media and cultures, she explores the impact of these constraints in creating the macrotext of the author. Aubin examines various instances of translations of Balzac's works such as *La Cousine Bette*, *Sarrasine* and *Le Réquisitionnaire* in different cultures with an emphasis

on the specific version of the source text preferred by translators and publishers, a question which is key in retranslations of canonical literature. She examines the constraints shaping the final products in the target culture and concludes that studying the various retranslations of Balzac's works across different languages and cultures creates a "prismatic" view of the source author.

In her study on the retranslations of *Hamlet* in Turkey, Hilal Erkazancı reveals how the image of *Hamlet* is reflective of the evolution in Turkey's self-image and the dividing lines that mark the country's identity as situated between the East and the West. The focus of the author's analysis is the discourses that frame the retranslations and multimodal translations of *Hamlet* and their shifting positions within the Turkish literary establishment. She argues that these discourses reflect the ontological question of Turkey's "other" as *Hamlet* is both remembered and dis-membered in line with narratives of the nation's self-image. Erkazancı concludes that westernization, secularism and nationalism are the three socio-political issues that have been associated with *Hamlet* in Turkey throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries and the work has taken on meanings beyond its status as a canonical western work. Erkazancı also discusses the different versions of *Hamlet* on stage and screen as forms of post-translation rewriting.

Natalia Kamovnikova sheds light on the trajectory of another canonical western author through retranslations: Rudyard Kipling in Russian translation. While she offers a panorama of Kipling's transforming image in the Russian literary landscape starting from the pre-revolutionary period, Kamovnikova reveals the dual facet of the author represented by the translations of *The Jungle Book* and his poetry, respectively. While *The Jungle Book* was retranslated and published in numerous editions, causing a loss in its stylistic features and leading to it being reduced to a children's book, a limited number of Kipling's poems in Russian translation became an inspiration and kept Kipling's image alive as a traveller and romantic. In both cases, both political conditions and censorship played a role in the direction that retranslations took, however, not everything can be explained through these factors and Kamovnikova suggests that further research of official regulations, publishers' archives and memoirs of translators and editors can offer the key to the multiple causation underlying Kipling's existing position in the Russian literary field.

In the final essay, Bo Li examines how gay literature is reframed through retranslations and reprints in his study on the print and multimodal translations of Pai Hsien-yung's *Nie Zi*. With a print translation, reprints, cinematic and stage adaptations and a TV series, *Nie Zi* is a prolific work that has been strongly reframed by the paratextual features of the print translations and the fansubbed subtitles of the play and the TV series. Li questions the motives behind the various retranslations of the work and sets out to trace the links and intertextual relationships among them. He illustrates the importance of visual resources in his investigation on covers and blurbs and raises questions about the translation of loaded terms used in a heteronormative society into a more open one. Li also shows how a print translation may foreshadow future reception and reproduction of a source text across different media.

The two translations included in this special issue are from Turkish literature. The first translation, "That Photo of a Gathering Over Raki", is the rendering of a poem by Gökçenur Çelebioğlu, a leading poet and translator. The second one is a short story by one of the modern

masters of Turkish fiction, Yusuf Atılgan, titled “The Ticking of the Clocks”. The similarities between the two translations do not end with their shared source culture; they are both products of workshops focusing on the translation of Turkish literature into English. Starting to receive more scholarly attention in recent years (cf. Cordingley and Frigau Manning) collaborative translation has existed as a phenomenon throughout history and is especially widespread in the field of literary translation where authors, poets and translators frequently collaborate. Shaped by different dynamics and concerns in each culture and time period, collaborative translation efforts can originate from a series of distinct motives. The two workshops to be briefly described here have primarily grown out of a desire to make Turkish literature more widely known in the English publishing world.

“That Photo of a Gathering Over Raki” is a translation by Saliha Paker as part of the Cunda International Workshop for Translators of Turkish Literature (CIWITL). The workshop ran for ten days every year at the Cunda Island in Turkey and gathered both experienced and novice translators who worked on poetry and prose in intensive sessions. Part of the mission of CIWITL has been to contribute to the creation of a new generation of translators of Turkish literature. The invitation-only workshop also hosted poets and authors whose works were being translated by the participants, enabling them to have discussions and collaborative translation sessions. The workshop was founded in 2006 and ran in Cunda until 2015, after which date it re-organized itself as a series of shorter ad-hoc sessions held in Istanbul. The activities of the workshop have resulted in a series of publications by the workshop participants, some of which are available on the workshop’s website at <http://tecca.boun.edu.tr/>. The workshop published a selection of its products in an edited volume titled *Aeolian Visions/Versions: Modern Classics and New Writing from Turkey* (Kenne et al. 2013).

Atılgan’s short story is translated by the members of University of Toronto Workshop in Literary Translation: Turkish-English (WILTTE) which has been meeting since its founding by Nefise Kahraman in 2016. Conceived under the auspices of the University of Toronto where the members of the workshop have been meeting in weekly sessions, the workshop has proven to be one of the longest lived and popular initiatives for translating Turkish literature into English in Canada. It is open to all interested parties with a sufficient level of competence in both Turkish and English who would like to take part in the process of translation. The selection of works for translation and the translation process itself are carried out by the members of the workshop under the leadership of Kahraman.

Finally, this issue was prepared as Covid-19 forced the world into lockdown and people had to find new ways to survive, socially, physically, financially and spiritually. In the midst of fear and anxiety, human creativity flourished in all kinds of unexpected ways, touching the lives of billions scattered around the world, united by the same worries and hopes. As the pandemic goes on and we continue to remain in our homes and bubbles, we find solace in art in all its forms. The artist featured in this special issue, Beyza Boynudelik, seems to have presaged our present life experiences early on in her artistic career. Isolation, the evolving human existence at the face of technological advances, and the solitude of the individual in the urban environment are common themes in her art. What is even more interesting is that she has been including the image of masks in her art in a

variety of settings for many years. You can visit Boynudelik's website (<https://www.beyzaboynudelik.com>) for more of her art and details of her artistic journey.

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