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Balzac Retranslated

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Introduction

Literary translation is tricky. Hardly ever do you hear a critic say the translation of a book is "good". In the best of cases people pretend that, even though they have been reading a translation, they were in fact reading Balzac, or Dostoevsky, or any other author of universal renown. For those who are able to read the original text, the translation is more often than not rejected as "inaccurate," "stylistically inadequate," "loose," "overly free," "not doing justice to the original," or simply "bad". James Payn even claimed that Balzac "is not translatable, or when translated is not readable" (67). However rhetorical such a statement might be, there is no doubt that the task of the literary translator is challenging. In 1967, Fritz Senn rightfully remarked: "... the translator is in a much worse position than critics or commentators are. They can afford to be highly selective and parade their scraps of insight and erudition with an air of being at home equally well in any place of the book—but the translator cannot shirk a single issue" (176). Faced with such difficulties, whether stylistic or content-related, the translator *has* to make decisions. These may not please everyone, yet they are genuine literary interpretations of the source text. Thus Chan Leo Tak-Hung's notion that literary translation criticism should "cease to consist of a cataloguing of mistakes and errors of various sorts" (17) and consider instead the translated text as a new text, is appealing. The translation can then be analysed according to the parameters that Discourse Analysis Studies have established, taking into account not only the style but also cultural and sociological aspects in the receiving culture. If studied in this manner, translations appear as "extensions," in which "the story of the literary text is taken up, reshaped, and continued by readers"—the translators—"who function very consistently as rewriters" (O'Neill 6).

> The parameters useful for this paper are described by Martin Momha citing Roulet:
>
> L'hypothèse scientifique qui sous-tend la démarche rouletienne est fondée sur le fait que la construction et l'interprétation du discours sont soumises à trois types de contraintes : *situationnelles* (liées à l'univers de référence et à la situation d'interaction) ; *linguistiques* (liées à la syntaxe et au lexique de la (ou des) variété(s) de langue(s) utilisée(s)) et *textuelles* (liées à la structure hiérarchique du texte). Ce postulat permet à Roulet d'élaborer un dispositif de cinq modules définissant cinq types d'informations de base qui peuvent être décrites de manière indépendante : les modules *interactionnel* et *référentiel* (qui relèvent de la composante situationnelle),

> le module *hiérarchique* (qui relève de la composante textuelle), et les modules *syntaxique* et *lexical* (qui relèvent de la composante linguistique). (Roulet et al. 2001: 44)[1]

Before engaging in the proposed analysis, certain terms need to be clarified. The first is "retranslation". The traditional meaning of the term is "creating a new translation" (Washbourne 621, note 1). However, the term has also been used for translations done from another translation, which Clifford E. Landers (130) and Kelly Washbourne (621, note 1) call "indirect translations", whereas Cay Dollerup distinguishes "indirect translation" from "relay translation" as follows: "The term *indirect translation* should be reserved […] for situations where two parties must communicate by means of a third intermediary realisation which has no legitimate audience" (19) and should not be confused with relay translation for the following reasons:

> Translations of the same text can continue indefinitely, not only between the same binary language pair, but also between languages and cultures. This is why *relay* is a better term than *indirect translation*, which implies not only that intermediary realisations are ephemeral, but also that the translation in hand is the only end product imaginable. (23)

In this paper, *retranslation* will be used for the realization of a new translation from the original source language into a target language in which a translation already exists, and *relay translation* for translations done from a translated source. However, the term *translation* will be extended to include *adaptations* such as movies, TV series, or even graphic novels (Aubin 2011), in any language, because adaptations, whatever the medium, are subjected to the same constraints as translations, effectively creating a new "language" to transfer the author's story and message. Moreover, adaptations generally suffer the same type of criticisms as translations do, as can be seen in Andrew Watts' following statement:

> Often derided for their supposed mediocrity, or labelled inferior to their prestigious source material, adaptations of Balzac can appear as richly complex works of art which engage both with the possibilities and constraints of their own media, and with the ideological concerns of their time. Equally, they can help us to explore aspects of *La Comédie humaine* that critics have frequently overlooked or neglected. (157)

Just like adaptations, translations may highlight some aspects of the source text that remained unexplored or overlooked by literary critics. There are many similarities between both types of *re*creations of an original creative work. In Mathew Reynolds' words, they are "translations that do not

[1] "Roulet's argument is founded on the scientific hypothesis that the construction and interpretation of any discourse are subject to three constraints: *situational* constraints (related to a referential universe as well as to a specific interaction situation); *linguistic* constraints (related to the syntactic or lexical norms of the language or linguistic variety that is being considered); and *textual* constraints (related to the hierarchical structure of the text). From this hypothesis, Roulet establishes five modules defining five basic types of information that can be characterized independently: the *interactional* and *referential* modules (which fall within the situational component), the *hierarchical* module (which belongs to the textual component), and the *syntactic* and *lexical* modules (which belong to the linguistic component)" (my translation).

attempt to conceal the changes that they are bringing to their sources, and try to show that the crossing of languages can be as much of a stimulus to the imagination as the crossing of media" (2013, 8).

In literature authors may be introduced to a new culture via a direct translation from the source language to the target one, or via a relay translation. Balzac for instance was first introduced to Chinese (Aubin 2017, 137) and Japanese (Hakata 2017, 178) readers via an English translation. Some stories also reached some foreign audiences via relay translations. Balzac's *Elixir de longue vie* thus found its way into an anthology created by Italo Calvino in Italy titled *Racconti fantastici dell'Ottocento* (1983). Lee Hyun Kyung, a professor of Italian in a Korean university, read the book and decided to translate it into Korean (2010), and this is how that particular story, which had never been introduced in Korea before, reached, very indirectly indeed, a Korean audience.

In this paper I would like to focus on how Balzac's novels have been extended, in the sense that Patrick O'Neill uses this term (6), when translated and/or adapted to other media, taking into consideration the *hierarchical* constraints related to the text structure; the *linguistic* constraints related to the syntactic or lexical norms of the language or linguistic variety that is being considered; and the *situational* constraints of the receiving culture. I will then wonder what the impact of these constraints might be on what O'Neil calls the author's macrotext. In that macrotextual model, the author is indeed "neither a unique and unchanging individual nor a serial proliferation of variable individual readings but instead the sum of an entire shifting *system* of potentially endless variable readings, the sum ultimately, that is to say, of *all* the translations and readings [of the author] that exist (or indeed *will* ever exist) in any language" (8). Such a model thus induces a different style of reading, which O'Neill calls *transtextual*, that implies to read across languages, but also, at a time when new medias are developing exponentially, to read across medias. This paper will provide an example of this type of reading and will consider what consequences arise from reading and/or viewing an author's work in a variety of languages and medias, adapted for a variety of cultures.

Hierarchical Constraints

Whether adapting a novel for the screen or translating it into another language, the translator needs to decide on their source text. Many writers rework their original text several times, and Balzac was well-known for adding long stretches of text to each proof that his printers sent him. Even after a text was first published, changes were made for all sorts of reasons. This was the case of *La Cousine Bette* which first appeared in *Le Constitutionnel*, a newspaper that claimed to be "political, literary, and universal". Its literary pages, printed at the bottom of the newspaper, could be cut and assembled day after day to create a book. The length of the text for each issue had to be precisely four pages, which was an initial constraint for the author. It is often believed that Balzac was at ease with this constraint, using the formula of the *feuilleton* to make his readers eager to read on. But this does not appear in the case of *La Cousine Bette*. Even though he did plan some chapters, thirty-eight in that first edition, these commonly were too short or too long for the daily delivery. In fact, the novel was published in 41 deliveries, which shows that the number of chapters did not match the number of deliveries. One delivery even finished with a colon, announcing a letter that Hortense was preparing to write:

> Elle passa dans sa chambre, se mit à sa table, et écrivit la lettre suivante[2] :
>
> (*Le Constitutionnel*, journal du 7 novembre 1846)

Subscribers had to wait till the next day to know what Hortense's letter contained.

Following that very first publication of *La Cousine Bette*, Balzac went back to *Le Cousin Pons*, which became a long novel as well. The two novels were published together in 1847 under the title *Les parents pauvres* by Louis Chlendowski first, and then by Louis Pétion. That version was geared to public reading rooms' customers. These publishers thought that this type of readership needed shorter chapters, so ninety-four chapters were added to the thirty-eight initial ones of *La Cousine Bette* for a total of one hundred and thirty-two. Initial chapter titles were also improved (Meininger VII 1227). Then another version of *Les Parents pauvres* was published in *Musée littéraire du Siècle – Série 2* in 1847. This *Musée littéraire du Siècle* was meant to be a compilation of literary works that would create "une bibliothèque universelle où trouveront un accueil empressé toutes les œuvres contemporaines qui auront mérité l'attention soit en France soit à l'étranger[3] " (Perrée and Desnoyers 186). From 1847 to 1876 the *Musée littéraire du Siècle* proposed to its readers "[un] choix de littérature contemporaine française et étrangère[4]," from Léon Gozlan to Marat to Walter Scott, Victor Hugo or Émile Zola. Its *Série 2* contained Balzac's *Parens pauvres* [sic] in two episodes (*La Cousine Bette* and *Le Cousin Pons*) without any division. In all, the *Musée littéraire du Siècle* published forty-six titles from *La Comédie humaine.* Finally, a volume entitled *Parents pauvres* was added to *La Comédie humaine* in 1848 by Alexandre Houssiaux (Édition Furne). That version had no division either. That is the version that Pierre-George Castex chose to publish for Balzac's *Comédie humaine* in the 1977 Éditions de La Pléiade, volume VII, and which is reproduced on the eBalzac website.

With such an array of variations to choose from, translators and screenwriters had to make decisions. *La Cousine Bette* was translated seven times into English in book format and adapted for the television once in French in 1964 and once in English by the BBC in 1971 (Aubin 2019a, 358). The novel was also translated in a variety of languages (Spanish, Italian, German, as well as Chinese, to mention only a few). What structure did these translators/screenwriters choose? Katharine Prescott Wormeley chose the version from *Le Constitutionnel*. Her translation has thirty-eight chapters whose titles correspond to those of the newspaper. Clara Bell, who worked for the Dent Edition that published the "centenary edition" of the *Human Comedy* in 1899, chose the Furne edition as a source text and used no division at all. In the most recent retranslation of the novel in 1992, the translator, Sylvia Raphael, explains clearly, in her "Note on the text", that she translated the Furne edition text, "but [that] the chapter and paragraph divisions of the Chlendowski edition, which were suppressed in the Furne edition to save space, are reintroduced for the convenience of the reader" (XI). María Teresa Gallergo Urritia, who translated *La Cousine Bette* into Spanish, also explains how she chose to proceed:

[2] She went into her bedroom, sat at her table and wrote the following letter: (my translation)

[3] …to create a universal library in which all the contemporary works that attracted positive attention either in France or abroad will receive a warm welcome. (my translation)

[4] a choice of French or foreign contemporary literary works (my translation)

> Para la traducción, hemos utilizado la versión de la colección Folio de Gallimard, de 1972, con presentación y notas de Pierre Barbéris, que conserva la división en 132 capítulos aunque incorpora las modificaciones de la edición siguiente, y hemos consultado los comentarios de Roger Pierrot a la edición de *Le Livre de Poche* de 1984, así como la presentación y las notas de Maurice Allen para la edición que, en 1959, apareció en Classiques Garnier.[5] (14)

Not all translators explain their choices. Kathleen Raine's translation (1948) is divided into thirty-eight chapters with no titles. Ives and Walton's translation (1896) only has thirty-five divisions, which may or may not correspond to the chapters of the initial text. Marion Ayton Crawford's translation (1965) only has sixteen divisions with no titles and no explanation why the text was divided in this manner.

Though we tend to think hierarchical constraints are less common in translation than adaptation, the translator's choices may still impact the author's reception in the language and culture of the country where the translation will be published. As for retranslation projects, they may or may not happen with very definite structural goals.

When adapted, though, hierarchical constraints are demanded mostly by time limits. Whereas translations can be just as long as the original text, movies are expected to last between 90 minutes to 2 hours, though in the case of series, that could be somewhat extended. To keep the storyline between time limits, some scenes might need to be deleted, and the whole story may have to be reshaped.

In *La Cousine Bette*, the use of chapters or not is in fact unessential for the structure of the story. To structure his novel, Balzac mostly uses two techniques: the flashback technique, which later proved to be essential for film directors in the 20th century; and letters, which appear as the driving force behind the unwrapping of the story.

The story starts in 1838 showing a very heated discussion between M. Crevel and Mme Hulot, Baron Hulot's wife, who in the end expels Crevel from her home and feels devastated by what he has just proposed to her. The reader learns how dissolute a life Baron Hulot is leading, thus putting his family in severe financial strain and jeopardizing his daughter's marriage. Then comes a series of flashbacks concerning the characters' origins. Some go back as far as the Napoleonic era, and even further, at the time when Adeline (Mme Hulot) grew up in Alsace with her cousin Lisbeth Fischer (Bette). Then we return to 1838 with Bette and Hortense discussing Hortense's marriage, which has just been cancelled because of Crevel, and Bette talks to Hortense about her *amoureux* (lover), though Hortense refuses to believe she has one. A new flashback to 1833 details how Bette became friends with Wenceslas, a sculptor and a Polish refugee, and how she helped him when he was just about to kill himself. Back to 1838 and to Hortense's marriage with Wenceslas, and then the story jumps to

[5] For the translation, we have used the version published by Gallimard for the Folio collection in 1972, with an introduction and notes by Pierre Barbéris, which keeps the 132 chapters but incorporates the modifications of the edition that followed. We have also used Roger Pierrot's comments in the 1984 *Le Livre de Poche* edition, as well as Maurice Allen's introduction and notes written for the 1959 edition which was published by Classiques Garnier. (my translation)

1841, which is, according to Balzac, where the story really begins (VII, 186: "Ici se termine en quelque sorte l'introduction de cette histoire,"[6]) and continues until 1846.

Apart from playing with time with the flashback technique, Balzac also structured his novel around letters. As Ewa Szypula mentions in her article on Balzac's correspondence, "Balzac makes the most of the purported 'failings' of the epistolary medium" (48-49). With or without divisions into chapters, the twenty letters that are invented, written, received, misunderstood or used by the characters are the threads that weave the story together. They appear as the plot's backbone and are, as can be expected, faithfully reproduced in all the translations. Further, their importance did not escape the directors who adapted the novel for television.

The two adaptations of *La Cousine Bette* that are of interest here are Yves-André Hubert's 1964 film adapted for French television by Jean-Louis Bory, with Alice Sapritch as Bette; and the 1971 BBC Series realized by Gareth Davies with Margaret Tyzack as Bette.

Both adaptations reshaped some of the scenes of the novel but maintained the letters's critical role. The French film lasts two hours, whereas the BBC series lasts altogether three hours and forty-five minutes (including the musical presentation, which is repeated 10 times, at the beginning and at the end of each episode). The French film starts with Bette seeing her protégé Wenceslas entering the house of her cousin Adeline, whom she envies and hates, and a voice-over summarizes what Wenceslas in fact meant to her. As for the BBC series, it starts with Bette finding Wenceslas half dead in a room close to her own where she went after detecting a smell of carbonic acid gas: a letter left on a table informs her that the young man has just tried to commit suicide, but she rescues him. The first episode details at length their relationship and how important it is for Bette while the Hulot family, her cousins, are briefly, though very accurately, introduced.

Both solutions are logical and make sense, and the story develops afterwards in a similar way as the book, with the use of letters. Differences in their use highlight either the screenwriters' interpretation of the story, or their care of the current circumstances. The French adaptation for instance completely ignores the references to Algeria, which is understandable two years after Algeria became independent. Many letters disappear in the process, so the number of letters is reduced to seven, all crucial.

In the BBC show, fourteen letters structure the text. Whereas some letters or messages are ignored, others are added. A letter written by Valérie in the first episode of the BBC series informs the reader that she indeed had a lover before Baron Hulot, a Brazilian who had to return to Brazil to wrap up his affairs there and get his money before returning to her and Paris. Meanwhile a flashback of Valérie and her Brazilian lover's farewell date presents the man who talks with a strong Brazilian accent, in keeping with Balzac's common use or mention of foreign accents in many of his novels

[6] "Here ends what is, in a way, the introduction to this story." (Sylvia Raphael's translation)

(Aubin 2019b). Another letter, dictated by Valérie's husband, shows the role he plays and how he uses his wife's looks to get money for himself.

In the French film, the voice over of the first scene is a flashback summarizing how the situation got to that point. Then the audience has an example of Bette's ability to manipulate people: she goes to her cousins' and makes Adeline and Hortense believe Wenceslas received a letter from his wife and needs to go back to Poland. Hortense faints and when Wenceslas shows up, has to explain to Bette how she managed to steal her *amoureux* from her. Then the letters written by Valérie to the potential fathers of the child to be born,—mostly the Baron and Wenceslas,—bring a new scene in which Hortense leaves her husband and Hector is trapped into writing incriminating letters to Valérie. Marneffe, Valérie's husband, has those letters in his possession and partially reads them to Hector as the police officers investigate the building where Hector and Valérie have been found guilty of adultery.

What is particularly remarkable in these adaptations is that both manage to highlight the importance of the letters to induce new developments and lead to the tragic outcome of the story.

Thus, we can see how the hierarchical constraints were taken into consideration in all the retranslations and adaptations, while the story was "reshaped and continued" in a way that fits the time and the circumstances in which these were produced. Each of them thus appears "chaque fois, ni tout à fait la même, ni tout à fait une autre[7]" as Verlaine would put it (2006/1867), yet incredibly creative and efficient. We will now see if the same can be said of linguistic constraints.

Linguistic Constraints

Linguistic constraints are generally speaking quite well-known to translators and even to the general public, whether they are syntactic (related to the structure of a sentence, for instance the need to move the verb at the end of a subordinate clause in German, which is different from many other European languages); or lexical (false cognates are well-known to be one of the first translation issues newcomers to the profession have to face even between languages that are fairly close like French and Italian).

Two types of linguistic constraints will be considered here: the translation of gender, and the presence of oral features in Balzac's novels and their translation.

a) *Sarrasine* and the Translation of Gender

Balzac often uses the "mise-en-abyme technique" in which stories are embedded in other stories to either explain a character or a situation. This is the case in *Sarrasine,* which takes place in Paris in the 19th century while a narrator tells Sarrasine's story which takes place in 18th century Italy. Sarrasine was a young French sculptor who was awarded a prize which allowed him to go to Italy to study his art. In Italy, Sarrasine falls in love with Zambinella, often called *La Zambinella* in the story, an opera singer who possesses the perfect figure the sculptor needs to create his masterpiece—the sculpture

[7] "who's never, each time, the same exactly, Nor, exactly, different" (Translation by A.S. Kline)

that would embody his ideal of feminine beauty. One evening, they are invited by the French Ambassador, but when Sarrasine gets there, he is in for a big surprise:

> Le palais de l'ambassadeur étant plein de monde, ce ne fut pas sans peine que le sculpteur, inconnu à tous les assistants, parvint au salon où dans ce moment Zambinella chantait. « C'est sans doute par égard pour les cardinaux, les évêques et les abbés qui sont ici, demanda Sarrasine, *qu'elle* est habillée en homme, qu'elle a une bourse derrière la tête, les cheveux crêpés et une épée au côté ? — Elle ! Qui elle ? répondit le vieux seigneur auquel s'adressait Sarrasine. — La Zambinella. — La Zambinella ? reprit le prince romain. Vous moquez-vous ? D'où venez-vous ? Est-il jamais monté de femme sur les théâtres de Rome ? Et ne savez-vous pas par quelles créatures les rôles de femme sont remplis dans les États du pape ? C'est moi, monsieur, qui ai doté Zambinella de sa voix. J'ai tout payé à ce drôle-là, même son maître à chanter. Eh ! bien, il a si peu de reconnaissance du service que je lui ai rendu, qu'il n'a jamais voulu remettre les pieds chez moi. Et cependant, s'il fait fortune, il me la devra tout entière. (VI, 1072)

Using the feminine article or omitting it creates an ambiguity in the French text, as the reader wonders about the character's gender. In this excerpt, the ambiguity disappears: Zambinella is the name of the man whereas *La Zambinella* is the name of the castrato who plays women's roles and sings in operas.

In English, the translation of this excerpt might be challenging since the article is the same, whether it is masculine or feminine. *Sarrasine* was translated four times into English: the first translation was done by Clara Bell for Dent's centenary edition, though it was not published until Project Gutenberg put it on its website (2016). Richard Miller appended his own to his translation of Roland Barthes' 1974 structural analysis of *Sarrasine* titled *S/Z*. Another translation was done by David Carter in 2007, and the most recent one was done by Jordon Stump in 2014.

In the three versions that were analysed, Clara Bell's, Richard Miller's and Jordon Stump's, the translators all chose to keep the full Italian name with the article, as if the article was part of the name. Thus, Clara Bell consistently refers to *La Zambinella*, in a fashion contrary to Balzac who sometimes uses the article, and sometimes not. In the excerpt we are considering, Clara Bell chose to emphasize the feminine pronoun using italics:

> "It must be in deference to all the cardinals, bishops, and *abbes* (sic) who are here,' said Sarrasine, 'that *she* is dressed as a man, that *she* has curly hair which *she* wears in a bag, and that *she* has a sword at her side?"

Only in Prince Chigi's answer is the *La* article removed from the castrato's name. In Jordon Stump's translation, though, the article is only affixed to the name when it is in French, creating a similar ambiguity. His translation of the excerpt is as follows:

> A great crowd crammed the ambassador's palace; only with difficulty did the sculptor, a stranger to all present, fight his way into the salon where Zambinella was singing. "I suppose it's for the sake of the cardinals, bishops, and abbots in attendance, asked Sarrasine, that she is dressed as

> a man, that she has a snood behind her head, crimped hair, and a sword at her side?" "She? What she is that?" replied the old lord to whom Sarrasine was speaking. "La Zambinella." "La Zambinella?" the Roman prince snorted. "Are you joking? Where do you come from? Has any woman ever set foot on the stages of Rome? And do you not know what sort of creatures play women's roles in the Papal States? It is I, monsieur, who gave Zambinella his voice. I paid that rogue's every expense, down to his singing master. And do you know, the ingrate never so much as set foot in my house again! And to think: If he makes a fortune, he will owe it entirely to me." (137-138)

A strategy such as is used by all three translators—the use of the Italian name with the Italian article—would be easily understood by an English reader even though it is a form of foreignization. In some languages, however, such a strategy would be completely impossible. In Chinese, there is no article at all. So, the name of Zambinella is transcribed as 藏比内拉 (Cáng bǐnèi lā). To create this name, the translator, Lu Binghui, used the sounds corresponding to the characters, depriving those of their common meaning. Consequently, the name could only be perceived as foreign, not only because of its length, but also because it had no meaning. And it could not be perceived as masculine or feminine either. The only way to translate the gender ambiguity would be by using a pronoun: 她 (tā) for a woman, 他 (tā) for a man. If spoken, though, the gender of the character remains ambiguous. In the paragraph mentioned, the translator makes Sarrasine (萨拉金 Sà lā jīn) add the mention "miss" (藏比内拉小姐 Cáng bǐnèi lā xiǎojiě), which is a very smart way of adapting the text to this Chinese linguistic constraint. In the last two lines, the use of the masculine pronoun 他 replaces the feminine 她 of the three first ones to talk about Cáng bǐnèi lā:

> 他好不容易来到大厅，藏比内拉正在那里演唱。'她怎么身着男装，脑后系一个发网，盘起了头发，腰间挎一把剑？大概是为了尊重在座的红衣主教、大主教和神甫们吧？'萨拉金问。'她？谁是她？'被问的那位年迈的贵族老爷道。'藏比内拉小姐呀！''藏比内拉小姐？'这位罗马亲王说，'您在开玩笑吗？您是哪儿来的？罗马各个剧院何曾有女人上台表演过？而且难道您不知道，在教皇统治的罗马，女人的角色是由什么样的人来扮演的吗？是我让他具备了这副嗓子，先生。这怪人所有的一切全是我给付的钱，包括他的音乐教师。哼，结果呢？我帮了这么多忙，他却并不感激，从来不肯进我的家门。
>
> Back translation:
>
> He finally came to the hall, where Cáng bǐnèi lā was singing. 'How come she wears men's clothing, a hair net behind her head, and a sword at her waist? It must be to respect the cardinals, archbishops and abbots here? asked Sà lā jīn. "She"? Who is "she"?" The old aristocrat who

> was asked answered. "Miss Cáng bǐnèi lā!" "Miss Cáng bǐnèi lā?" The Roman Prince said, "Are you kidding? Where do you come from? Have women ever performed on stage in the various theaters of Rome? And don't you know, in Rome, where the pope rules, what kind of person plays the role of the woman? I gave him this voice, sir. I paid everything for this weirdo, including his music teacher. And, what is the result? I helped him so much, but he is not grateful and does not even want to visit me at home. (my translation)

The reader can see how the translator managed to transfer Sarrasine's sexual ambiguity into her translation despite the linguistic constraints of the Chinese language. Another example will be presented below of both constraints and translators' creativity.

b) The Translation of Oral Features

Balzac, as the "chief precursor of realism" (Augustyn), could not ignore the way his characters were supposed to speak in real life. Balzac's readers can find all kinds of accents, registers, idiolects and sociolects that give authenticity to his characters (Aubin 2019b). Madame Vauquer, for instance, consistently mispronounces the word *tilleul,* which she pronounces « *tieuilles,* malgré les observations grammaticales de ses hôtes » (*Le Père Goriot*, III 52). Balzac also has fun imitating the German (Alsacian) accent of Baron de Nucingen, a recurring character in the *Human Comedy*, and he also reproduces the very special language of rogues and convicts in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. Such particularities of Balzac's style are a challenge for any translator, and it is interesting to see what happens to those features in translation.

Some translators simply ignore those features, whereas others try to find creative solutions. In the case of Mme Vauquer, Ellen Marriage translates as follows: "lime-trees at the further end of it; *line*-trees, as Mme Vauquer persists in calling them..." (*Father Goriot*, online). This works, even if lime-trees, though of the same family as linden-trees, could be confused with the trees that produce limes, which don't grow in Paris. More creative even, Henry Reed, in *Père Goriot*, finds a different plant to illustrate Mme Vauquer's idiolect:

> The centerpiece of the garden is a large bed of artichokes, a word that Madame Vauquer, in spite of being formerly Mademoiselle de Conflans, and in defiance of pedantic comments from her guests, persists in calling "artlechokes" (8).

In the case of Nucingen, translators generally tried to reproduce his accent, though some languages like Chinese make this impossible. The following excerpt from *La Cousine Bette* was often adapted, though not always:

> — *Et si fus edes testidué* ? ... dit le baron millionnaire en riant.
> L'autre baron, anti-millionnaire, devint soucieux.
> — *Rassirez fus, che ne fus ai vait l'opjection que bir fus vaire abercevoir que chai quelque méride à fus tonner la somme. Fus edes tonc pien chêné, gar la Panque à fôdre zignadire*. (VII 178).

Here are a few examples of how this paragraph was translated in English and some other languages:

Adapted	Not adapted
Katharyne Prescott Wormeley (1888) " Subbose you lose your siduation?" said the millionnaire baron, with his horrible German accent. The non-millionnaire baron became thoughtful. " Oh! I only make dat opjection to show you dat I run some dancher in gifing you dat sum. You moost be hard-up, for der pank has your zignadure." (180-181)	**Clara Bell/James Waring (1896)** "But if you should lose your place?" said the millionaire Baron, laughing. The other Baron—not a millionaire—looked grave. "Be quite easy; I only raised the question to show you that I was not devoid of merit in handing you the sum. Are you so short of cash? For the Bank will take your signature." (X 99-100)
Ives and Walton (1896) "And subbose you were dizmisd? – "queried the millionaire baron, with a laugh. The other baron, anti-millionaire, became thoughtful. "Don'd pe alarmed. I vould not haf made the opjection egzept to zhow you dat I am endidled to zome credit vor gifing you der money. You moost pe fery hart bressed, for der Pank has your zignadure." (213-216)	**Kathleen Raine (1948)** "And what if you are dismissed?" said the millionaire Baron in his inimitable German-Jewish accent, with a smile. The other Baron, non-millionaire, became thoughtful. "But do not worry, I didn't raise the objection except only to point out to you that I have some merit in giving you the money. You must be in great straits, then, for the bank has your signature. (140)
Marion Ayton Crawford (1965) 'And subbose you are tismissed?' said the German-Jewish millionaire Baron with a laugh. The other Baron, the reverse of a millionaire, knitted his brow. 'Ton't worry. I only raised the opjection to show you that it's rather goot of me to gif you the money. You musd pe hart bressed, for the Pank has your signadure?' (146)	In German: **Arthur Schurig (1920)** »Wenn nun aber Ihre Stellung hops geht?« wandte der Millionenbaron lachend ein. Der andere Baron, der Nichtmillionär, wurde nachdenklich. »Berühigen Sie sich! Will damit nur gesagt haben, daβ es ein Dienst ist, wenn ich die Summe gebe. Sie sind in Verlegenheit, denn die Bank hat 'n Wechsel von Ihnen.« (117)
Sylvia Raphael (1992) '*Put subbose you're tismissed*, ' said the millionaire Baron, with a laugh. The other Baron, the contrary of a millionaire, became thoughtful. *'Ton't worry. I only raise the opjection to boint out to you dat id's rather goot of me do gif you ze money. You bust pe very hart ub, for the Pank has your signadure.*' (146)	In Chinese: **傅雷, Fu Lei** "你丢了差事怎么办呢？……"百万富翁的男爵笑着说。 那一个非百万富翁的男爵立刻上了心事. "放心吧，我这么提一句，无非表示我借这笔款子给你还是有交情的。大概你真是手头紧得很，银行里有你的背书呢。" (Online)

In Italian: **Francesco de Simone (1983)** «E se *foi* foste *testituito?*» disse il barone milionario ridendo. L'altro barone, il non milionario, divenne pensieroso. «*Rassicuratefi, fi ho fatto l'opiezione zolo per farfi federe che ho qualche merito a dare a foi la zomma. Ziete tunque brobrio in tifficoltà, berghé la panca ha la fostra firma.*» (136) In Spanish: **María Teresa Gallergo Urrutia (2010)** -¿Y si lo cesan a *ustet?* – dijo, sonriendo, el millonario barón. El otro barón, el antimillonario, puso cara de alarma. -*Tganquilicese,* que no le he hecho este *comentagio* más que *paga hacegle fer* que tengo *ciegto mégito* en *tarle* esa *cantitat. Tepe te estag ustet* en un *apugo consitegaple, pogque* el *Panco* tiene su *figma.* (183)	"Nǐ diūle chāi shì zěnme bàn ne?……" Bǎi wàn fùwēng de nánjué xiàozhe shuō. Nà yígè fēi bǎi wàn fùwēng de nánjué lìkè shàngle xīnshì. "Fàngxīn ba, wǒ zhème tí yíjù, wúfēi biǎoshì wǒ jiè zhè bǐ kuǎn zi gěi nǐ háishì yǒu jiāoqing de. Dàgài nǐ zhēnshi shǒutóu jǐn de hěn, yínháng lǐ yǒu nǐ de bèishū ne."

In English, it is obvious that the decision of translating or not translating the accent is a matter of choice. In both Chinese and German, the fact that the translators did not translate the accent is understandable. In Chinese, characters correspond to ideas, and though there are sounds to say them, these sounds may vary according to the area where the speaker comes from. Yet the character remains the same, and there is no way to indicate how one person pronounces it; thus, people from different parts of China may have difficulty understanding each other, but if writing the characters, they can communicate perfectly. The only possibility Fu Lei had was to say explicitly that Nucingen spoke with a German accent, but he did not do it. As for German, it would seem quite absurd to represent a German accent as foreign. Yet the translator did try to make Nucingen speak in an unusual way for a man of his social status. In fact, Nucingen speaks in a very colloquial register using familiar idioms such as *hopsgehen* (to vanish, blow up) and by using 'n instead of "den" or omitting the subject pronoun *Ich* in "Will damit nur gesagt haben". This demonstrates that the translator has considered what he should do with the accent, and since he couldn't change the German accent in German, he chose to change Nucingen's sociolect to make him appear of a lower social status.

In English, by choosing not to translate Nucingen's accent, the translators make him appear as a rich businessman of the City and lose the effect of contrast between the dramatic situation of Hulot and the banker's hard-to-read accent which acts in this excerpt as comic relief.

This shows how difficult it is for translators to make decisions when facing linguistic constraints of this kind. Faced with this challenge, they rely on their linguistic competence as well as creativity.

Let us see now what happens with situational constraints. Are these more difficult to transfer into a culture than hierarchical or linguistic ones?

Situational Constraints of the Receiving Culture

a) The Victorian Era and the Translation of Balzac into English

Balzac was not received in the same way in every country. Little time passed between the publication of his works in France, whether they were in newspapers or in book format, and their translations in Italy. Paul Arrighi explains that the proximity of the two countries, "une certaine affinité spirituelle, et surtout une longue tradition, expliquent le fait, depuis longtemps noté, que la pénétration française fut particulièrement intense dans l'Italie du Nord, et notamment à Milan."[8] (234)

Yet, England did not receive Balzac with such expediency. Michael Tilby explains: "The translation of Honoré de Balzac's novels was slow to take place, their perceived immorality being thought to render them unsuitable for Victorian readers" (100). The Victorian era was well-known for its puritanism and systematic censorship. Michael Tilby continues: "There was general agreement that only *Eugénie Grandet, Le Curé de Tours, Le Médecin de campagne* and certain of the early short stories could safely be put in female hands" (100).

Thus, the first nearly exhaustive version of Balzac's novels in English were not done in England but in the USA, as late as the 1880s. Ironically, the translator was a woman, Katharyne Prescott Wormeley. Because her work was considered substandard by well-known writers such as Oscar Wilde and Henry James, Dent Editions of London found a new translator to *retranslate* Balzac. That new translator was also a woman, Ellen Marriage (Lesser). Even though Dent's plan was to publish all the novels of Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, some were thought too crude to allow a woman to translate them. Thus a James Waring was invented, the pen name of both Ellen Marriage or Clara Bell who came later to help with the project. Finally, in 1899, Balzac's "complete" *Comédie humaine* was published, in time for the centenary of his birth. Some stories were omitted for fear of the editor being arrested for publishing such shocking books.

Thus political and social censorship hindered the introduction of Balzac to England. At the turn of the century though, English readers had two versions to choose from if they wanted to read Balzac: the sixty-two titles translated by Wormeley, or the eighty-three titles published by Dent out of the 91 written by Balzac for *La Comédie humaine*.

[8] "It has long been noted that French culture had a strong presence in Northern Italy, especially around Milan, not only because these areas experienced a sort of spiritual affinity, but also because they shared a long tradition." (my translation)

b) The fall of the Qing Dynasty in China and the Relevance of Balzac's *Réquisitionnaire* to the Political Situation in that Country

However incomplete these two English versions were, they served as *relay* for the translation of Balzac into both Chinese (Jiang Fang) and Japanese (Kaoru Hakata). One of the first four stories introduced in China was *Le Réquisitionnaire*, translated as *The Recruit* by Wormeley, and as *The Conscript* by Marriage (Aubin 2016). It is hard to know which version was used, since the translator, Lin Shu, actually used an interpreter, Chen Jialin, whose interpretation into colloquial Chinese was not recorded (a case of *indirect translation* in Cay Dollerup's terminology), then transformed into classical Chinese by Lin Shu who knew no foreign language but was a very respected man of letters, and an expert in classical Chinese (Lung 163).

The historical context around the translation of *Le Réquisitionnaire* in Chinese is especially interesting since it was published in 1915, four years after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. The reason for choosing that particular story was obviously political. China was then going through a number of drastic changes, transitioning from the traditional aristocratic system into a Republic. Moreover, because those changes took time to implement, a group of former aristocrats created a political party, the *Zong She Dang*, Party of the Ancestral Shrine of the Ruling Household (Geng 191), that aimed to re-establish the Qing Dynasty in China. This was just like the French *Chouans* who were trying to return to the *Ancien Régime* political system and re-establish the Bourbons as kings of France. One sentence in the Chinese translation is key to understanding the similarities between France after 1789 and China after 1911:

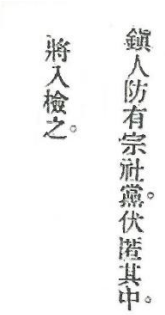
Balzac's original text:

> L'accusateur public imaginait tout un drame pour amener nuitamment le fils de Mme de Dey chez elle. Le maire croyait à un prêtre insermenté, venu de la Vendée, et qui lui aurait demandé un asile; mais l'achat du lièvre, un vendredi, l'embarrassait beaucoup. Le président du district tenait fortement pour un chef de Chouans ou de Vendéens vivement poursuivi. D'autres voulaient un noble échappé des prisons de Paris. Enfin tous soupçonnaient la comtesse d'être coupable d'une de ces générosités que les lois d'alors nommaient un crime, et qui pouvaient conduire à l'échafaud. (X, 1110)

Ellen Marriage's translation:

> The public prosecutor spun out a whole drama to bring Mme. de Dey's son to her house of a night. The mayor had a belief in a priest who had refused the oath, a refugee from La Vendée; but this left him not a little embarrassed how to account for the purchase of a hare on a Friday. The president of the district had strong leanings towards a Chouan chief, or a Vendean leader hotly pursued. Others voted for a noble escaped from the prisons of Paris. In short, one and all suspected that the Countess had been guilty of some piece of generosity that the law of those days defined as a crime, an offence that was like to bring her to the scaffold. (*The Conscript,* 254-255)

Lin Shu's Translation:


鎮人防有宗社黨伏匿其中。將入檢之。

Pinyin:
Zhèn rén fáng yǒu zōng shè dǎng Fú nì qízhōng. Jiāng rù jiǎn zhī.

Back Translation:
In case there are Zong She Dang rebels hiding in there, the people of the town would like to go inside and check.

Certainly the content of the source text has been greatly reduced since there is no mention of who these "people of the town" are, and what each of them thinks, yet that reduction, as well as the extension introduced by the mention of the *Zong She Dang rebels* aim at making the translated text relevant to Chinese people. This shows to what extent the translation *is* a political commentary on the original text: as the *Chouans* and the *Zong She Dang rebels* have the same goal in both countries, therefore they are interchangeable. For Lin Shu and Chen Jialin, it makes sense to use the Chinese *equivalent group* to bring the story closer to the Chinese reader. In Venuti's terminology, the translator chose to *domesticate* the story (41) and make it relevant to the current Chinese situation, and in O'Neill's terms, it *extends* the story so that it becomes meaningful in the receiving country. Thus we see how Balzac's macrotext expands in the process, as the receiving culture is making sense of an author whose readership was initially expected to be only the people who could read French.

Conclusion

Translations, retranslations, relay translations and adaptations all expanded Balzac's aura, but in the process, they required that the message be discussed, or even questioned. Each new retranslation is a commentary on the source text. Through this the voice of the translator is heard. As Hakata mentions, reading a novel or a poem in a translated version has its charms, since the reader may experience a feeling of exoticism. But there may be frustration too:

> Traduire, placer un texte dans un autre système d'écriture et dans un autre contexte social, accentue parfois certains charmes et ajoute des saveurs. La distance spatiale et temporelle, la dissonance entre les différents pays et cultures peuvent renforcer l'impact de la lecture, bien qu'elles risquent aussi quelquefois de l'estomper. [9] (177)

[9] Transcribing a text in a new writing system and translating it into a new social environment may enhance its charm and add flavour to the reading experience. Distance, whether of space or time, as well as the differences between some countries and cultures may also intensify the impact of what we read, though they may also erode it sometimes. (my translation)

Translation, retranslations, relay translations and adaptations all contribute not only to a writer's fame, but also to his works' extensions within new cultures and societies. Whatever the times or the places described in the original, extensions created by translators and re-translators contribute to extending the meaning of the original to respond to the oneiric and social needs of the receiving culture. Each culture will make foreign authors its own, seeing them through the prism of its own experience, history and values. Balzac, who has often been hijacked for political purposes by right-wing extremists in France, was viewed by communist countries, particularly the USSR and Mao's China, as the writer who best disclosed the inherent flaws of capitalism (Marx and Engels were both enthusiastic readers of Balzac). Reading across languages induces a "prismatic" view of the author's works, a view that includes the many interpretation variables that any text contains:

> In the Prismatic view of translation, a source text is in itself multiple, able to be interpreted in different ways. Translations too are open to interpretation and are re-translated in their turn in the mind of every reader. (Reynolds 2019)

Each new interpretation expands the author's macrotext. In the process, the source text is reshaped and continued, opening up new paths of interpretation and taking on a renewed and deeper meaning that makes it not only all the more relevant to the original reader, but also to readers of other areas of the world, thus making the author, his works and his views universal. Fu Lei perhaps sums it up best in an article dedicated to Balzac in 1924:

> Si nous sommes profondément touchés par des incidents et des histoires qui ont eu lieu dans le passé et dans un pays étranger, c'est parce que les sentiments, bons ou mauvais, qui règnent dans les cœurs des êtres humains et qui les font agir, restent éternels et représentent l'universalité de la nature humaine. Seule la nature humaine sert de norme éternelle pour mesurer les œuvres d'art.[10] (quoted and translated by Yang Zhen 2017, 149)

[10] The reason why we are so deeply moved by stories and events that took place abroad and in the past is that human feelings, whether good or bad, that pervade the human heart and make humans act, are eternal and embody the universal character of human nature. Human nature is the only eternal norm by which Art can be measured. (my translation of Yang Zhen's translation)

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