

Retranslation and Reception

Studies in a European Context

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Canonical Translation and Retranslation. The Example of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* in Spain

Susanne M. Cadera

Abstract

This chapter will first deal with the concept of canonical translations from a theoretical point of view, as to date there is no established definition of this concept. It will be shown that there can be many factors to consider when we categorise a translation as canonical. Some examples will show how some traditional translations have been canonized over time. In the last part, the chapter will study the specific example of the Spanish translations of *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka because of its undeniably profound reception in Spain, as proved by the number of translations. There are currently thirty-two retranslations on the Spanish publishing market, in addition to the first translation. Taking into account the criteria established in the first theoretical part, the chapter analyse the reception of the first translations of *The Metamorphosis* in order to assess whether or not it can be considered canonical, despite the existence of so many other versions.

Keywords

canonical translation – literary canon – Kafka – *The Metamorphosis*

1 Introduction

There are currently thirty-three published translations of Franz Kafka's novella *Die Verwandlung* [The Metamorphosis] available in Spain. Few other literary works have been translated so many times into the same language and within the same cultural space. This can be understood as a sign of the enormous interest the work has aroused since it was first translated in 1925, ten years after the publication of the original in Germany, whereas the most recent translation of this work dates from 2018. The present chapter is a continuation of the preliminary study that I published in 2017 (Cadera 2017: 169–194) on the

relationship between the retranslations of Kafka's work and its reception in Spain, and based on the hypothesis that a large number of retranslations is a measure of the impact a literary work has in the target culture. In order to test this hypothesis, the reissues, dates of the different translations and editions, articles of literary criticism and mentions or references in the press were considered, as well as the retranslations. This study serves as a basis for taking a deeper look at the reception of the work and its Spanish translations from a different point of view. The fact that the first translation is still on the market and was reissued multiple times over no less than ninety years – the last edition coming out in 2015 – despite the existence of other translations, leads us to the question of whether there are canonical translations which for some reason do not age. The concept of canonical translation has barely been studied. There is, moreover, effectively no existing definition of canonical translation. Nor has it been studied to any meaningful extent from the angle of retranslations and their reception – i.e., to see whether among the retranslations there is one that stands out in some way to make it canonical.

The first aim of this chapter is to define what might be considered a canonical translation and what requirements such a translation would need to meet. The second is to determine whether the first translation of *Die Verwandlung* into Spanish is canonical. As for the reception of Kafka's work in Spain, I am interested in exploring this matter having started out with the hypothesis that, apart from the number of retranslations, the fact that a canonical translation exists indicates even greater reception in – or influence on – the target culture. Therefore, as a basis for my analysis, I consider the following questions:

- Is there such a thing as a canonical translation?
- What are its defining features?
- Can the existence of a canonical translation give us clues as to how a given work has been received and read in the target culture?
- Can the first translation of *Die Verwandlung* by Franz Kafka be considered a canonical translation, despite the existence of thirty-two other translations in Spain?
- What does the existence of this translation tell us about the reception of the work in Spain?

To answer these questions and explore the concept of canonical translation, this chapter is structured as follows: in order to offer a definition of canonical translation, I will first try to explain the concept of literary canon as defined by experts. With these definitions in mind, I will then propose one for canonical translation. Some examples of translations of important works that can be considered canonical will be presented, along with some that cannot, to arrive at a checklist of minimum criteria. Finally, the case of the first translation of

Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* will be studied in relation to its retranslations to reach conclusions about how important the reception of the translation has been in Spain.

2 The Literary Canon

If we are to answer these questions, it is necessary to know what is meant by *canon* and *canonical* in the context we are discussing. Over centuries of history, the term has undergone modifications or extensions in its usage. A sample of these different usages is to be found among the thirty-six contributions to the monograph on the literary canon, *Kanon Macht Kultur* (Heydenbrand 1998), the result of a symposium of the same name held in 1996. As Anz (1998: 3) explains in the introduction to the volume, the various authors describe a canonical literary work in different terms. These are as follows:

- sacred, outstanding, highly valued, high-status
- immortal, enduring, resistant to the changes time brings
- exemplary, classic, normative
- necessary to pass on, familiar to many or to the majority, necessary reading for many, worth reading several times and with some intensity

Added to these meanings are descriptors such as: true, good, beautiful, representative, powerful, relevant to the present, deconstructive or open to many readings.

A very simple definition of a literary canon would be: a list of texts that ought to be read. Denis Scheck, a critic and literary translator who published his own canon in 2019, starts with the following questions to assess which works ought to be on the list: what is worth reading? Which literary works or texts ought to be known as a bare minimum? Which works or texts still have something to say to us today? (Schenk 2019: 10). However, as Scheck himself adds, the answer is far from straightforward, and not even the best read or those who have devoted themselves to the study of literature are able to give a spontaneous response to these questions.

The act of classifying texts to integrate into a corpus originates in theology: a list of sacred texts that formed the basis of reading for the Christian world (Neuschäfer 2006: 76). From the 18th century onwards, the term began to be applied also to literary texts which “thanks to their extraordinary aesthetic, linguistic and ideological quality, are considered capable of substituting the religious orientation with a secular one, thus contributing to the formation of an educated public within an Enlightened nation” (Neuschäfer 2006: 76). The concept of *Weltliteratur* – universal or world literature – took shape in Germany

around 1800, devised by August Wilhelm Schlegel (Schulz-Buschhaus 1988: 45) and subsequently promoted by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who stressed the importance of translations of literary works in making them known in other parts of the world:

[...] Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* was based on the practice of translation: in the creation of a canon that would represent the best of each nation in both its specificity and its universality, translation played a crucial role.

SHIELDS 2013: 2

Indeed, the period of German Romanticism saw numerous translations produced. From this "canon of translations" (Heydebrand 1998: 622) aimed at making known hitherto unknown or only partially known works, the focus shifted in the nineteenth century to the national canons that were published as national-themed *History of Literature* (Brinker-Gabler 1998: 84–86). In the twentieth century, however, a debate opened on the validity of literary canons in general – and national canons in particular (Ehrhart 1998: 97–121). This argument about the validity of a literary canon is still going on right into the twenty-first century, faced with the practical impossibility of generating a manageable corpus to act as a guide for a reader seeking personal cultivation through literature, or for authorities governing educational curriculums, for example. On the one hand, there is the view that the inclusion or exclusion of works in a canon is rather a function of political interests (Meek 2001: 81), and on the other, that not having canons would impede educational programming in schools and universities, as well as the continuity of tradition. As Kennedy (2001) argues, canon formation is something inherent in human instinct; we have a need to preserve our tradition and our knowledge:

Canon formation is a natural human instinct, an attempt to impose order on multiplicity, to judge what is best out of many options, and to preserve traditional knowledge and values against the erosion of time and influences from outside the culture.

KENNEDY 2001: 105

Apart from encyclopaedia entries, histories of literature or compulsory reading lists for school and university subjects, some attempts to offer a rather reduced list have emerged. Perhaps the best known is *The Western Canon. The Books and School of Ages* (1994) by the American philologist Harold Bloom, and most recent one is the above-mentioned *Schecks Kanon* (2019) by the

German literary critic Denis Scheck. However, these canons can only be taken as personal recommendations, albeit from experts, that do not presume to be comprehensive. It is also striking that there is a wide gulf between the two: whereas Bloom opts for twenty-six canonical authors, Scheck chooses 100 canonical works. Whereas Bloom focuses on the literature that he designates as *Western*, including that of the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia, the US and two representative Latin American authors, Scheck embraces works from all continents.

Confronting the difficulty of a single literary canon, whether national or universal, there are other suggestions that advocate a distinction between several canons. *Kanon Macht Kultur* (Heydenbrand 1998) arrives at the conclusion that it is not possible to speak of a single canon, but that there necessarily exist several canons with different functions. The authors propose different terms for these canons with differing content and roles. It is not possible to comment on all of them in this chapter, but essentially what emerges from these proposals is a classification into three types of canons:

1. An absolute or basic canon encompassing globally recognised works and authors whose inclusion is, by expert consensus, beyond dispute. Such a canon is relatively stable over time, though its constellation might shift. They are works of unquestionable aesthetic quality.
2. A representative or historicist canon, created on the basis of different aspects that may be related to the absolute canon. Examples would be canons of literary genres, period-specific styles, languages, minorities, national entities, or media such as cinema. Such canons are generally highly unstable and do not gain general expert recognition. They are created for relevant and special purposes.
3. *Applied* canons that are created for specific ends and are the result of a selection of texts and/or authors to meet needs – e.g. for encyclopaedias, anthologies, educational curriculums, the reduction or expansion of library collections, etc. The rationales for such canons are pragmatic in nature, and sometimes commercial (Heydenbrand 1998: 615).

Apart from this general classification of literary canons, the debate over canonisation tends to focus on the specific criteria to be met by works or authors for the purposes of being considered canonical and becoming part of a canon. These criteria are usually based on the descriptors used for canonical works as listed above. Thus, for Bloom (1994: 1–12), literary canons must include prescriptive and representative books. These must be time-resistant or indestructible. He adds that they should also possess the originality to evoke surprise, astonishment and mystery in the reader, and need to have left a legacy

and influence in other literatures. Haug (1988: 231–233) adds that, on top of the criterion of the works being received by succeeding generations, they ought to have introduced important literary innovations and be cited in literary encyclopaedias and histories. Scheck (2019: 20–21) also insists on the permanence of canonical books, adding that they must have changed the reader's vision of the world, leaving them with a different perception of reality after reading.

Nevertheless, bearing in mind the vast quantity of works produced in the history of literature, to form a single literary canon is a complex or practically impossible task, even an *absolute* or *basic* canon. Moreover, in recent decades and coinciding with the rise of gender studies, there have been calls to include more female writers in the existing canons (Munns 2001: 17–28). There have been similar calls to include African American authors in the US canons (Cain 2001: 3–16). As for those canons that aspire to be universal, they should be less Western-centric and include African works and authors (Lindfors 2001: 55–80) – and by extension they would also need to consider Asian authors (Li and Guo 2013: 1–8).

3 Canonical Translation

When we refer to works in a literary canon, we generally mean works in their original language, although in the case of broad canons which are supposed to be universal these works are read in their translated version, unless the reader knows the original language. Despite Goethe's insistence on the importance of translation for making *Weltliteratur* known, there is usually no reflection on the role of translation or translators in the debates about literary canons. If we also reflect that there are usually several retranslations of the major canonical works, deciding which ones to choose becomes difficult without a prior study of all these translations. In the encyclopaedias of universal literature, for example, the selection of the translations appears to be rather arbitrary. In *Cassell's Encyclopaedia of World Literature* (Buchanan-Brown 1973), the titles of the works are recorded in their original language, but sometimes an English translation features with the translator's name and no indication of whether other translations exist.

There are a few contributions on specific works or genres and their translations that attempt to identify which of the translations can be considered canonical. That is the case with Bunge (1995), who analyses the canonisation processes for troubadour lyrics. According to Bunge (1995: 61), a canonical translation must fulfil three criteria: 1) to have endured over time; 2) to have

been cited frequently; and 3) to have been included in literary anthologies.¹ For Ranke (1995: 108–110), in his study on the presence of translated classics in German Histories of Literature, a canonical translation should have the following characteristics: 1) to have introduced a work into the target culture; 2) to have had an influence in the literature of the target culture; and 3) to stand out for its readability in the target culture. It is clear that these characteristics are qualifying criteria similar to those established for canonical literary works. However, to date there exists no canon of translations or translators, and due to the difficulty of classifying the different translations of the same text – above all when there are several retranslations – there is unlikely ever to be one. A literary work in its original language usually only exists once (excluding classic works which might exist in various manuscripts and versions), whereas there can be several translations. Every translation appears in its time and with a set purpose. With the exception of a retranslation undertaken because of clear deficiencies in the previous translation/s (omissions, misunderstandings or misinterpretations, censorship, indirect translations, etc.), qualifying one translation as superior to another is a difficult and inappropriate judgement. Comparative studies of different translations, above all in the framework of Retranslation Studies, usually adopt a descriptive approach following *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* by Toury (1995). Toury moves away from studies focused on the equivalence of the original with the target text, believing that as the reader of the translation is not familiar with the work in its original language, the translations therefore have a life of their own (Toury 1995: 23–27). Translation studies, for their part, should confine themselves to analysing whether a translation is *acceptable* and *adequate*, which is to say not straying too far from the original, reflecting the substance of the key elements in the text and fitting in with the schemata of the target culture (Toury 1995: 60). The designation *canonical translation* among several others should emerge from a descriptive perspective, through establishing parameters like those proposed by Bunge or Ranke. The aim of such an assessment is not to create a canon of translations, but to understand how translations operate over time. An approach to the study of translations from the point of view of their reception can thus prove illuminating: how has a translation been read and understood – and how and to what extent has it been *consumed* over time? In terms of reception, every translator is at once both reader/receiver and writer/transmitter. The resulting text depends on their perception and interpretation

1 Bunge suggests a few other criteria, but these refer to specific features of troubadour literature.

of the work. The translator is a mediator between the original and the text they offer the reader.

[...] the translator is an institutional mediating reader because they mediate between what they have received in their reading and what they are going to communicate to others via their translation. This mediation is intentional, as the reading performed by the translator is defined, in the end, as a meta-reading aimed at influencing the end recipients of the translation.

ENRÍQUEZ ARANDA 2007: 15²

From the perspective of the aesthetics of reception, reading is a communicative act that culminates with the interpretation of the text by the reader (Jauß 1973: 169). With translated works, the reader in some way has “to trust” (Pym 2020) this version as it is their only means of approaching the original text. Studies of retranslations with a focus on reception, should mainly concentrate mainly on two aspects: 1) comparative textual analysis between the original and various translations (linguistic, cultural, semantic etc.) to find out if they can reflect or evoke the original in the reader; and 2) diachronic analysis of retranslations and their editions, commentary by critics and other authors, appearances on lists of recommendations, references in the general or specialist press etc. to see how and to what extent one or more translations have been received. Using this latter methodology and with certain qualifying features in mind, an attempt will be made to compile a checklist of criteria that a canonical translation should fulfil.

3.1 *Checklist of Criteria for Classification as a Canonical Translation*

Based on the criteria established for designating an original literary work as canonical and on the two studies found to deal with the subject of canonical translations (Bunge 1995 and Ranke 1995), a generalist checklist of possible features is proposed, considering that each work and literary genre may have its particularities that cannot be included here.

From the point of view of reception, a translation can be considered canonical when it meets at least some of the following criteria that distinguish it from other translations into the same language and in the same cultural context:

1. Enduring over time or for a long time (reissue of the same translation)
2. Introduction of an author or work into the target culture
3. Influence on the literature of the target culture

2 This quote is a translation from the Spanish original text.

4. Frequent citations or studies both in the secondary literature (literary criticism or history of literature) and in informative texts (newspapers, magazines)

5. Being a complete translation, free of censorship or self-censorship

The first criterion, *enduring over time or for a long time*, is undoubtedly the most mentioned for classifying a literary work as canonical. With translations, longevity is relatively straightforward – if laborious – to check, by searching through the different editions in library catalogues, in the UNESCO *Index Translationum* database, in publishers' catalogues or in studies on translation. On the other hand, it is the most striking criterion, especially when there are later translations of the same work. That is the case of the first translation of *Die Verwandlung* by Franz Kafka, as we will see further on. But it cannot be the only criterion, as there are translations that have lasted over time and which cannot, however, be considered canonical, as they have not contributed to the original being received in the right way, this is to say, they have contributed to an inadequate reception in the target culture. As shown in the volume *Retranslation in Context* (Cadera and Walsh 2017) through different studies on retranslation, in the sociohistorical and cultural context of Spain, the era of dictatorship under the Franco regime had an enormous influence in terms of censorship, not just on literary works themselves, but also on translations. Some of these censored translations (which were sometimes self-censored beforehand by translators or editors) stayed on the market for a very long time perhaps due to the fact that they were not revised after the advent of democracy in Spain or were not reissued for financial reasons. Commissioning a new translation is costly for publishers and involves a commitment to the author and the work in terms of marketing.

A representative example of such cases is the translation of *1984* by George Orwell (1949). In Spain there are currently four different translations of this work. The first, by the translator Rafael Vázquez Zamora, was published by Destino in 1952 after having gone through a severe censorship process. The censorship file can be consulted at the *Archivo General de Administración* [The General Archive of the Administration] in Alcalá de Henares near Madrid, the Spanish national archive holding the censorship records of the Franco regime. In the file for the first translation, there are fifty-two deletions or modifications by the censor.³ Comparison with the published translation reveals compliance with all the censor's demands. But further comparison with the English original shows another twenty-six modifications or omissions

3 *Archivo de la Administración* [The General Archive of the Administration]: IDD 50.02, expediente 3632–50.

of political content not flagged up by the censor, which leads us to suppose that those parts have undergone pre-emptive self-censorship by the translator or publisher themselves. Moreover, this first edition does not include the appendix *Principles of Newspeak*, a clear criticism of totalitarian regimes. Publication of the work was finally authorised on 3 March 1952 and presented as a criticism of Communism and the Soviet Union,⁴ although the work was in fact critical of all types of authoritarian regime, including those like Franco's. Today it is still possible to read comments or reviews that interpret the work as a criticism of Communism. This reception of the work in Spain is due to the same translation having been republished by several publishers. In the year 1984 itself, doubtless because of the marketing potential of the date, a retranslation by the same translator came out that was faithful to all the parts that had previously been manipulated. However, the appendix was still missing. This new version remained in print until 2008. The first complete translation – by Olivia de Miguel – was not published until 1998. The second, also complete, by Miguel Temprano García, came out in 2013. Because the first translation was on the market for thirty-two years and the second incomplete one for twenty-four, the work could not be read in Spain as it was intended by Orwell. Therefore, while it meets the first criterion (enduring over time or for a long time) and also the second one (introduction of an author or work into the target culture), it cannot be considered a canonical translation.

There are, however, other enduring translations which prove the existence of canonical translations. Take, for example, some translations made during German Romanticism in a bid to promote *Weltliteratur* in Germany. One of the translators was none other than August Wilhelm Schlegel himself, who created the term *Weltliteratur* and translated seventeen works by Shakespeare into German between 1797 and 1810. With these translations, the philologist, teacher and literary critic made Shakespeare's dramatic oeuvre known in Germany, and from then on it had a huge influence on Romantic writers. The translations are still marketed by several publishers. One of them, De Gruyter, publishes the original versions in the collection *Shakespeares Dramatische Werke* [Shakespeare's Dramatic Works], available in PDF format. These editions show that they continue to be read, as well as having great interest for researchers in literature and translation. The translations have been praised for their great quality, closeness to the original and readability in German. According to Ranke (1995: 110), they constitute a milestone in the history of

4 The whole process of its censorship and publication can be found in Lázaro (2004) and Meseguer (2014).

translation in Germany as they do not actually read like translations. Because of them, the German reading public has made the work of Shakespeare *its own*:

For more than just conscientious translations, they are brilliant artistic recreations, full of poetry and happy inspiration, so much so that Schlegel in effect creates a German version in no way inferior to the original. No wonder that Germans have accepted Shakespeare as one of their own. In fact, it is often easier to understand the meaning of certain passages in Schlegel's modern German than Shakespeare's late Renaissance English.

HILT 1974: 134

Although there were earlier translations, it was through Schlegel that the work of Shakespeare was introduced to German readers. These translations also served as an example to follow for German dramatists itself (Ranke 1995: 100).

Another translation that can be considered canonical is that of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *Don Quixote* (1799–1801) by Schlegel's collaborator and contemporary, Ludwig Tieck. Indeed, they worked together on many occasions on translations or advised each other. Tieck also translated some of Shakespeare's dramas, which were subsequently published jointly with Schlegel's translations. Tieck's version is a retranslation, as there existed two earlier translations from 1648 and 1775. These, however, did not have much influence in the German culture. It is through Tieck's translation that the work was introduced into German culture. His translation was able to embody "the melodic values of the original, following the grammatical and stylistic turns and subtleties of Cervantes' language"⁵ (Barsanti 2005: 52). In achieving this, he helped the German Romantics to develop their concept of irony. The simultaneous seriousness and jocularly, fantasy and reality, and the distancing of the narrator shaped the Romantic irony that Tieck himself (among others) later used in his own works (Strosetzki 1997: 245). For all these reasons, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* became the Romantic novel *par excellence* for the German Romantics (Barsanti 2005: 55). Despite the appearance of another retranslation in 1800 by Dietrich Wilhelm Soltau, in direct competition to Tieck's (Strosetzki 1997: 244), and subsequently four new translations (1889, 1964, 2003, 2008), Tieck's version is still in print. The most recent complete edition dates from 2016 (published by Contumax-Hofenberg). The numerous studies and mentions of the translation over its more than 200-year-long history clearly make it a canonical translation.

5 This quote is a translation from the Spanish original text.

In summary, it is fair to say that both A. W. Schlegel's translations of Shakespeare and Tieck's rendering of *Don Quixote* fulfil the criteria set out at the start of this section. It has also been possible to see that the reception by contemporaries, readers or the wider public, as well as the reception they have had over the course of their history, are the keys to their being considered canonical translations.

4 The First Translation of *Die Verwandlung* and Its Retranslations

Kafka's reception in Spain began with the translation of the novella *Die Verwandlung* into Spanish and continued steadily with translations of the rest of his work. In fact, as in many other countries, in Spain Kafka is considered a canonical author:

Kafka is in Spain today, as in the rest of the world, an inescapable cultural icon. Canonized as a classic of modernity, postmodernity has only accentuated his image of being ahead of his time.

MARTÍNEZ SALAZAR 2016: 15⁶

Apart from the reception of Kafka's work by Spanish readers, his work has influenced Spanish literature itself "through the assimilation of themes and motifs, intertextual references, rewriting processes and even the fictionalisation of his own life"⁷ (Sánchez Zapatero 2016: 3). Works such as those by Calvo Carilla (2016: 9–14), García Jiménez (1987) Martínez Salazar (2016: 15–19, 2019) or Sánchez Zapatero (2016: 39–43), for example, demonstrate the influence of Kafka's work in Spain and on Spanish authors. Martínez Salazar (2019) in her doctoral thesis *La recepción de la obra de Franz Kafka en España (1925–1965)* [The Reception of Franz Kafka's Work in Spain], analyses his reception in different spheres: the various editions of his works, translations, literary and cultural criticism of his work and his influence on Spanish and Latin American writers. She concludes that despite the claim that the reception of Kafka's work was non-existent during the era of the dictatorial Franco regime, there is clear evidence that there was indeed reception, culminating in its publication in book format in 1966 by the recently launched publishing house Alianza (Martínez Salazar 2019: 706–708). It was possible to corroborate this regarding the reception of *The Metamorphosis* through mentions, reviews and

6 This quote is a translation from the Spanish original text.

7 This quote is a translation from the Spanish original text.

articles in the Spanish press between 1925 and 2016 (Cadera 2017: 186–190). However, according to Martínez Salazar (2019: 358–360, 380–488), the publication of *The Metamorphosis* in 1925 did not have an immediate impact on the Spanish authors of the time but would have to wait until the post-war era in Spain when Spanish fiction revived. At any rate, that was when other works by Kafka became known, too, such as *The Trial* (*Das Urteil*) or *The Castle* (*Das Schloss*), which would have had a joint influence together with the shorter fiction. That is to say, the influence was not solely due to the translated version of *Die Verwandlung*, but also to the peculiarity of Kafkaesque narrative in general. Another aspect to bear in mind with the reception of *Die Verwandlung* is the numerous academic studies and magazine or press articles there are on this work. It all points to the influence that Kafka's work has had on Spanish literature and culture. The first Spanish translation of *Die Verwandlung* aroused interest in its author, so it can be stated that this translation is the one responsible for introducing Kafka into the Spanish literary-cultural system. All this means that the translation fulfils three of the five characteristics necessary to be considered canonical:

- Introduction of an author or work into the target culture
- Influence on the literature of the target culture
- Frequent citations or studies both in the secondary literature (literary criticism or history of literature) and in informative texts (newspapers, magazines)

We now turn to explore whether the requisite feature of the translation enduring for a long time is also fulfilled.

The first translation of the novella *Die Verwandlung* by Franz Kafka was published in two instalments, in numbers 24 and 25 of the prestigious cultural journal *Revista de Occidente* [Journal of the West] in 1925. This was ten years after the publication of the work in Germany.⁸ In this Spanish version, entitled *La metamorphosis*, the name of the translator does not appear. Twenty years later, in 1945, the *Revista de Occidente* reissued the same anonymous translation as part of its *Novelas extrañas* [Strange Novels] collection. According to the censorship file consulted in the *Archivo de la Administración* [The General Archive of the Administration], the then editor of the magazine requested the publication of 3,000 copies of this edition, which was authorised without any amendment or modification by the censor (Cadera 2017: 183). It would be a few more years before the first version of Kafka's novella appeared in book

8 For the publication process of the original, see Cadera (2017: 171–172). For a detailed list of the novella's translations, see Cadera (2017: 172–180).

form. In 1966 the publishing house Alianza brought out the same anonymous translation, having first gone through the censorship body, who again authorised publication of the 10,000 copies requested without censoring any part of the work (Cadera 2017: 183). This translation was reissued by Alianza without modifications until 1998 (specifically in 1969, 1971, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1996 and 1998). The same anonymous translation also appeared with other publishers: in 1981, with the small publisher, Salsadella; in 1982 with Salvat; in 1984 under the umbrella of the *Club Internacional del Libro* [International Book Club] run by the Madrid publisher Promociones y Ediciones; in 1993 with Cantábrico de Prensa; in 1996 and 1999 with Alba; in 1998 with Océano; in 1999 with the publishers Perea and in Folio Editorial; in 1999 and 2001 with Planeta; in 2000 and 2002 with Sol; and in 2001 with Andrés Bello. Thereafter, it appeared in an edition together with *Report to an Academy* in 2003, 2004 and 2005, and in 2004 together with that same story, *The Trial* and *Amerika* under the Edimat imprint. The fact that there have been so many different editions suggests that the publishers had confidence in the commercial success of this translation, which, as can be seen, was justified. The data also shows a special interest arising towards the end of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first with other publishers joining in and publishing the same anonymous version of the work, most likely coinciding with the centenary of Kafka's birth in 1883.⁹

There is no doubt that all those editions are faithful to the translation from 1925 because of the special language usage, an old Spanish that reflects the era and its prevailing literary styles. What is most striking is the old-fashioned use of reflexive verbs, some obsolete syntactic structures and the deployment at times of archaic lexis. Nevertheless, the translation in this old-fashioned form has survived on the market for eighty years, as can be seen from the reissue dates.

In 2011, Alianza republished *The Metamorphosis* giving no indication of who the translator was. However, a reading of the text reveals that it is the first translation again, with just the most markedly outmoded aspects updated. This version was published without stating clearly that it was a revision of the first translation or crediting anyone with updating the language. The most recent edition of this version dates from 2015, the anniversary of the first publication

9 All the data comes from the retranslation database of the research projects Retrades and RetraRec, carried out since 2014 in the department of Translation and Interpreting at Comillas Pontifical University (Madrid) and funded by the same university. The main researcher is Susanne M. Cadera.

of *Die Verwandlung* in Germany. Another ten years need to be added to the eighty, then, as it is the same translation – just with its language better adapted to current usage. As can be seen, so many years with Alianza plus its appearance on other publishers' lists is a clear indication that the translation has not lost readers. Furthermore, of all the retranslations, this is the one that has gone through more editions over time, thus giving it the largest presence in public and private libraries. We can therefore say that the first criterion of enduring over time is also fulfilled in the case of this anonymous translation.

However, the history of this first translation does not end here. In 1938 the same anonymous translation was published in Argentina by Losada, along with other stories by Kafka, as *La metamorfosis y otros relatos* [The Metamorphosis and Other Stories]. The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges appears as the translator of the whole volume. Curiously, from 1986 onwards, this same translation was published, not only in several Argentine editions and imprints, but also by Spanish publishers as a single volume or with the other stories, and Borges credited as the translator. These were high-volume publishers such as Planeta and Círculo de Lectores. The last edition with Borges as translator dates from 2005 in the Planeta group's Altaya collectibles series. As can be seen from the dates, the same translation was marketed in Spain simultaneously as an anonymous work and as one attributed to Borges. It was precisely the language that raised the suspicions of fellow Argentine Sorrentino, who published several articles on the matter (1997, 1998, 1999). As well as being outmoded, the language is characterised by peninsular Spanish expressions that are not used in Argentina. Borges' literary style is also usually reflected in his translations, which is not the case with this one (Cadera 2017: 176–177). Despite Sorrentino's discovery and the controversy that ensued (Martínez Salazar 2019: 137–144), the Argentine publisher Losada brought out an anniversary edition of *The Metamorphosis* in 2016, attributing the translation to Borges (100 years after the publication of *Die Verwandlung* in Germany in 1915). This means that the first translation is still in circulation in Argentina – and almost certainly for marketing reasons, still attributed to Borges.

Among all the translations published up to 2018, there are others that have lasted for some length of time. One such version is the first genuine retranslation of the work, signed by R. Kruger and first published in 1975 by Edaf with other Kafka stories, *The Judgement, The Great Wall of China, First Sorrow and A Hunger Artist*. This volume was published under the same imprint several times until 2008, a total period of thirty-three years. The next three retranslations, credited to Pilar Fernández Galiano, Julio Izquierdo and Tina Alarcón respectively, have also stayed in print for more than twenty years, while those that came after were more short-lived. Among the thirty-two retranslations,

there are six scholarly editions, as it is a set text in the *Universal Literature* option for the Spanish *Bachillerato*, or A-level equivalent.¹⁰

Nevertheless, no translation has lasted as long as the first one. Moreover, as we saw above, this first translation also presents other features that allow it to be considered canonical: it was the one that introduced the author and the work *Die Verwandlung* into Spanish culture; no sooner had it been published than it attracted comment in the press, and there are several references to it in subsequent years; the first publication in book format by Alianza in 1966 also had a lot of resonance in the Spanish press; and after the dictatorship of the Franco regime, coinciding with its publication under other imprints, mentions in the press again harked back to the translation, with some attributing it to Borges and others refraining from doing so (Cadera 2017: 186–190). Just because this first translation can be considered canonical does not mean that the retranslations lack value or have not also had their own impact. That is to say, the canonical value here derives from the reception of this translation in Spanish culture and not so much because of its higher quality. It is reasonable to suppose that a translation reissued so many times and over the course of ninety years must be readable in the target culture, one of the criteria adopted by Ranke (1995: 108–110) for canonical translations, but that does not mean the other translations are any less readable. As stated above, every translation is of its time and comes into being for different purposes, such as illustrated or commemorative editions, editions with an introduction and critical commentary, educational editions, etc. However, the existence of a translation that has survived for so many years and is also the most published to date means that it is still going to be read as it will be the one with the greatest presence in homes and libraries and will thus be read for even longer. And perhaps this longevity has encouraged other publishing houses to launch their own versions, knowing that the work remains of general interest. That is to say, the existence of a canonical translation can be a stimulus for other publishers to embark on a translation and publishing project of their own. The hypothesis stated at the start of this chapter, namely that the existence of a canonical translation among several retranslations indicates an even greater influence and desire for reception in the target culture, appears to have been confirmed. The analysis would need to be carried out with other works that have been retranslated, but in the case of *Die Verwandlung* in Spain, it could be confirmed.

10 The controversy over the translation of the title in some versions such as *La Transformación* [The Transformation] is beyond the scope of this chapter. For more information, see for example Martínez Salazar (2019: 137–144).

5 Conclusions

This chapter had two main aims: 1. To delimit the features of a canonical translation from the point of view of its reception in the target culture, not so much for its excellence as for its influence, although those two values may be interrelated. 2. To determine whether the first translation of *Die Verwandlung* can be considered canonical. This second point was not designed to contrast the quality of the first with the thirty-two retranslations, but rather to understand the process or the trajectory of this first translation and the influence it has been able to exert in the target culture, in this case Spain. These aims were set out to verify the hypothesis that the influence of a work in the target culture is greater when, in addition to several retranslations, there is a canonical translation.

Delimiting the features of a supposedly canonical translation involved consulting different definitions of canonical literature and the literary canon, as well as some preliminary works that approached the concept of canonical translation. It also meant searching for examples of classic translations that might offer clues as to how to define canonical translation. Eventually, five basic features emerged: *enduring over time; the introduction of the author and the work into the target culture; influence in the literature of the target culture; frequency of citation or studies both in the secondary literature and informative texts; and, finally, being a complete translation, free of (self) censorship.*

As has been seen in this chapter, the first anonymous (although sometimes attributed to Borges) translation of *Die Verwandlung* in 1925 has all these features. The trajectory of the publications and editions of this translation has been long and complex. What is most striking is its having endured for 90 years on the market, in spite of the existence of many other, more modern translations in a more contemporary idiom. The fact that it has been reissued even up until the twenty-first century seems to indicate that the reader does not reject its archaic language. All of this shows that the translation has had and continues to have an influence on Spanish culture, as it is the most reissued of all the existing versions. Although it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that Kafka's work had an influence on writers of Spanish fiction, the novella provoked immediate comment from literary critics and the press on its publication and continuously thereafter. This increased considerably following its reissue in 1966. Moreover, this first translation managed to get past the censor for its reissue in 1945 when presented by the *Revista de Occidente*, and then again in 1966 when submitted by the publisher Alianza, without any part having to be modified or suppressed. Bearing in mind all those aspects from a reception perspective, the first anonymous translation – the one attributed to Borges in some editions – can be considered canonical. It would be interesting

to repeat this exercise with translations of other works so as to take forward the concept of canonical translation from the point of view of reception.

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