

Retranslation and Reception

Studies in a European Context

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Retranslation and Reception – a Theoretical Overview

Susanne M. Cadera and Andrew Samuel Walsh

Abstract

This chapter provides a theoretical background to the relationship between retranslation and reception. It sets the basis for the empirical chapters that are to follow by providing a historical overview of both concepts, and how they have been developed by different theorists seeking to establish the nature of these literary phenomena as mutually dependent concepts. It examines the nature of the relationship between retranslation and the reception that a text may have in another literary culture, specifically in terms of the link between the reception of an author's work and the frequency and nature of the corresponding retranslations. The chapter also addresses the importance of this symbiotic relationship in the creation of a canon of foreign literature, and examines how historical, social or cultural changes may be reflected through the publication of retranslations and a consequent evolution in the reception status of any given author in the target culture.

Keywords

rettranslation – reception – reader response – world literature – horizon of expectation

1 Introduction: Translation and World Literature

The role of translation in the transmission of a national literary culture and its agency in the reception of this culture are questions that have generally been approached separately and from independent perspectives in the parallel disciplines of Translation Studies and Comparative Literature. Although *Weltliteratur* [World Literature] is a term coined almost 200 years ago by August Wilhelm Schlegel and subsequently promoted by Goethe, it continues to hold currency among scholars of transnational literary phenomena in general and translation in particular. According to Damrosch (2003: 6), “A work enters into

world literature by a double process: first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin". Evidently, this transition into a "broader world" of transnational literature is carried out fundamentally through translation, which Bassnett and Lefevere consider "a shaping force in the construction of the 'image' of a writer and/or a work of literature" (1990: 10). Regarding the importance of translation in the construction of an international canon, Even-Zohar also uses a similar terminology to assert that "translated literature maintains a central position [...] and participates actively in shaping the literary polysystem" (1990: 46). In terms of the role played by translation in cultural dissemination beyond national borders, Pym posits "as a working hypothesis, that the model of inculturation can be applied to the translational spread of large-scale ideological cultures" (2013: 89). Indeed, this notion of inculturation ("the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a culture or group by another person or another culture")¹ is an intriguing one from the point of view of the retranslation and reception of transnational literature, and one which requires further empirical research in the form of case studies, which is precisely what we aim to provide in the following chapters which offer a wide variety of analyses of this phenomenon in a European context. By "European context", we mean both works by European authors, and also the dissemination through a European language such as German of the retranslations of a canonical Latin American author like Mario Vargas Llosa.

If we agree with Even-Zohar that translated literature is indeed at the centre of the literary polysystem, it must also be considered that this centrality is not universally applied or achieved in its reception, as evinced by the changing fortunes of authors and texts in different countries and over different periods of history. In fact, the reception of a (re)translated text works on both a diachronic (historical) and synchronic (contemporary) level, and the concept of literary systems and the place of (re)translations within them varies enormously between hegemonic languages and their literary cultures and those of their minority or minoritized linguistic counterparts. In terms of the reception of an author and/or a literary work in a foreign culture through translation, Nelson and Maher have stated that "the study of reception must also take into account the effects of such external factors as critical reception, the awarding of major prizes, the prominent presence of a given author or national literature at international trade fairs and a receiving culture's exposure to a nuanced

1 Definition by Oxford Dictionaries at <https://www.lexico.com/definition/inculturation> (Accessed 2 February 2021).

view of a region's political and cultural life" (2013: 7). And according to Rita Wilson, "the international circulation of literature depends to a great extent on translations that consecrate national authors, texts and traditions in the international sphere" (2013: 178).

In this sense, it is pertinent to ask who chooses which foreign literature we read and which authors are consecrated? Who are the cultural gatekeepers of an author in a foreign culture, particularly when that author has been strongly politicized? A salient example of a deeply politicized and ideologically motivated reception can be found in the case of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, whose murder at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War conferred upon him the practically unquestionable status of the quintessential martyr of the conflict, and the subsequent frequent retranslations of his work have entirely conditioned his reception abroad as the paradigmatic progressive icon of contemporary Spanish literary culture. In addition to a guided, politicized reception by these cultural gatekeepers, the relevance of the figures who introduce readers to a foreign literature, or who recommend and, therefore, endorse a foreign author is also often of paramount importance in the decision to translate or retranslate a particular text. For example, in terms of the prestige afforded to a translation, Salman Rushdie's literary endorsement of Gregory Rabassa's English version of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (which Gabriel García Márquez himself referred to as "better than the original"), undoubtedly conferred credibility and further commercial appeal upon the English translations of the Colombian author, and even any subsequent references to the very term magical realism in translations of other foreign authors. A notable example of this magical realism effect in translation can be found in the paratexts and the marketing of the English translations of the Chinese author and fellow Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan, whose identification with the work of García Márquez has also tended to boost his prestige by association and encourage retranslations of his work.

Indeed, another issue which conditions the reception of a text from the first translation to subsequent retranslations are these paratexts themselves, which Génette referred to as "a privileged place of pragmatics and strategy, of an influence on the public" (1997: 2). The use of a strikingly new cover for a retranslation, with more or less stereotypical or perhaps transgressive images, can also have a significant effect on the willingness to purchase and read an author's work and on their subsequent reception. The first Spanish language translation of the Hispanist General Brennan, for example, was characterized by stereotypical images of Deep Spain aimed at a Latin American audience in the 1950s, whereas the book covers that appeared during the Transition to

democracy in the country in the 1980s, by which time Brennan had become a progressive icon in Spain, opted for images of his venerable figure in the background observing a less clichéd scene from a more modern Spanish society. Another question that may also fundamentally modify the reception of a text is the decision to retitle. This is sometimes entirely necessary, as in the case of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, traces of whose notoriously racist original title in the UK when first published in 1939 (*Ten Little Niggers*) are still evident in the translated title of the book in many cultures. In fact, the dilemma inherent between maintaining the original title for commercial reasons and addressing the need to eliminate antiquated and offensive terms found an eloquent expression in the 2020 decision to finally retitle the French version and substitute *Dix petits nègres* (the direct translation of the now unpublishable original British title) with *Ils étaient dix*, whilst also removing all references to the term "nègre" from the rest of the translated text.²

In theory, retranslation must somehow represent a change in reception or, at the very least, be triggered by this change, even though superficially at least it may seem that the decision to retranslate a work may simply be due to external factors such as a commercial decision on the part of the publisher, significant external changes in the social context of the target culture (e.g. the end of a dictatorship), an evolution in the aesthetic and/or ideological consideration of the first translation(s), or the awarding of a major literary prize. It is common publishing knowledge that bestowing a prestige award such as the Nobel, the Goncourt, or the Booker is obviously a major catalyst for retranslations, and also a hegemonic factor in the subsequent reception of a hitherto unknown author in the target cultures (Pickford 2011, Spencer 2013). It is also well known that another of the most common reasons for retranslation is the overall linguistic ageing of the earliest translation (Berman 1990:1, Hurtado Albir 2001: 599, Venuti 2004: 26), and it is evident that a notably antiquated

2 The direct translation of the original title continues to be commonly used in many foreign-language versions e.g. Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Hungarian, and Russian. At the time of writing, other Romance languages are still using the original direct and increasingly offensive translation, as is the case with Spanish (*Diez Negritos*) and Catalan (*Deu Negrets*). Curiously, Italian opts for the middle ground with *Dieci Piccolo Indiani* [Ten little Indians], an alternative title which was used in some US editions between 1964 and 1986. In Portugal, however, the first translation in 1948 opted for the much more neutral *Convite para a Morte* [Invitation to Death], whereas in Brazil the traditional title (*Os caso dos Dez Negrinhos*) has now been dropped in favour of the more neutral *Dez figuras negras* [Ten black figures], which also reflects more faithfully the plot of this murder mystery. The diverse colonial histories and different racial sensibilities of all these target cultures have obviously conditioned this retitling process. See Lopes Lourenço Hanes (2018).

or even obsolete translation will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect upon the reception of an author and/or a particular work, not to mention their sales figures.

Although many translation scholars have cited Reception Theory at least tangentially in their work, thus far in the literature there has not been a single, systematic study of its relationship to retranslation which has addressed the following fundamental questions: to what extent does retranslation affect the reception of an author in the target culture, and what is the nature of this influence? It seems reasonable to assume that frequent retranslations of the same literary text into the same language must show a direct correlation with its impact in the target culture. Logically, this correlation may operate in two directions: either these retranslations have been motivated by a change in reception, or these retranslations have actually been the cause of a change in the reception of an author or a text in a foreign culture. Although there can be many varied reasons why books are retranslated, the need for a new translation must logically indicate a certain shift in interest in the author and thus conditions the reception of his or her work. Therefore, our initial hypothesis is that there must be a demonstrable and perhaps bidirectional relationship between retranslation and reception, and the central challenge posed by this book is to provide empirical examples from the specific context of European literature of how frequent and significant retranslations may affect the changing reception of an author's work. In this sense, we will start from a theoretical presentation of the question and move on to a series of thematic case studies from a wide variety of different European languages and cultures. In this respect, our rationale is to move from a theoretical perspective to the practical application and analysis of our hypothesis that retranslation and reception are mutually dependent concepts.

2 **Retranslation**

The nature of the relationship between the reception of an author's work and the retranslation of his or her work, both in terms of its frequency and its changing nature, is a phenomenon that has only been tangentially reflected in the burgeoning literature in the field of retranslation since the term was first coined in 1990 in a monographic volume of *Palimpsestes*. In this journal, Antoine Berman and Paul Bensimon proposed a concept that was subsequently redefined in 2002 by Andrew Chesterman as the *Retranslation Hypothesis* (RH). According to this hypothesis, the first translation of a literary text is notably more oriented towards the target language (domestication)

whereas subsequent retranslations would tend to be nearer to the source text and language (foreignization). The hypothesis is based on the presumption that the more time that passes between the original and the retranslated text the more convincing the latter is likely to be (Berman 1990: 1–2, Gambier 1994: 414–415), although it is equally true that there are certain translations that hardly appear to age or become obsolete, despite the appearance of subsequent retranslations. Berman refers to the existence of a “*grand translation*” and even goes as far as to state that “every great translation is a retranslation” (1990: 2–4). In *stricto sensu*, the term retranslation can be correctly applied when a text has been translated more than once into the same target language and culture (Gambier 1994, Pym 1998, Venuti 2004), and it presupposes that one of the basic functions of the first translation is to introduce the work into the target culture and, consequently, make it as comprehensible and accessible as possible for readers who are not necessarily familiar with the culture of the source text (Bensimon 1990: IX). However, case studies of retranslations of particular works have shown that it is not always the first translation that introduces the author or the work in the target culture and, in fact, the first translations do not always have the same impact as subsequent retranslations for a variety of circumstantial, social and historical and even circumstantial reasons.³ The *Retranslation Hypothesis* has been subject to attempts at verification for over thirty years since it was first formulated. In the current state of Retranslation Studies, scholars largely agree that the RH is not a methodological starting point that could help them to advance in their research. Paloposki and Koskinen argued as early as 2001 that they “do not find sufficient support for the retranslation hypothesis: there are no inherent qualities in the process of retranslation that would dictate a move from domesticating strategies towards more foreignizing strategies” and added that it presupposes “a questionable tendency to reduce historical development into straightforward evolution or linear progress” (2001: 36). Nowadays, Retranslation Studies adopt a much broader and more systemic approach (Cadera 2017: 5–18, Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar 2019: 1–7), although there could be at least a logical assumption in the RH in terms of the relationship between reception and retranslation in cases when a text is retranslated after a period of time during which the foreign culture has become more familiar to the target culture. In these cases, the last translation could be more foreignizing because the reader should be able to identify and to understand cultural and aesthetic elements of the original text transposed into the translation. However, even this

3 For specific thematic analyses of this phenomenon, see Cadera and Walsh (2017) and see Berk and Tahir (2019).

is not always the case. Over the course of the last two decades, scholars have broadly agreed that the phenomenon of retranslation is a complex one, and that it has to be studied in each specific cultural, social and historical context in order to obtain consistent research results.

Current research is focused on systemic approaches, since retranslations are mostly motivated by different and complex reasons. Some examples of these complex motivations that can profoundly condition the reception of a translation include the literary fame of the translator (Japanese culture even has the figure of the celebrity translator), the promotional activities of the publishers, the abundance of reviews (or the lack of them) both in the general press and in specialized journals and literary magazines, the personal endorsements of famous authors (as seen in the case of Rushdie and García Márquez, or Allen Ginsberg and García Lorca for the Beat Generation), or the socio-political connotations acquired by the author (for example, the Czech author Vaclav Havel's work was made immediately more attractive in translation when he became widely known as one of the leaders of the democratic struggle against Communism in the former Czechoslovakia and then the first president of the Czech Republic).

In this scenario, it is precisely the status of the text and the author in the target culture which have motivated the retranslations i.e. reception has led to retranslation. On some occasions, this may mean that a work is reinterpreted in the light of this changing reception in order to produce a new and significantly different translation (Deane-Cox 2014: 12–18), such as when more relevant biographical information about its author or referential framework appears, or when a definitive version of a disputed text is published and receives a wide critical consensus as the standard version. A notable example of the latter is to be found in the case of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which has currently been published in eighteen different editions in the original English version alone. If we agree with Even-Zohar that translated literature is a system itself within the literary polysystem and therefore also forms part of the receiving culture, then a new translation of the same literary work must logically indicate some identifiable changes in the target culture that have led to the need for a new version. However, Venuti argues that translation can also produce the opposite impact on the target culture system i.e., it can produce changes in literary conceptions: "Retranslations reflect changes in the values and institutions of the translating culture, but they can also produce such changes by inspiring new ways of reading and appreciating foreign texts" (2004: 36).

As stated previously, another frequent supposition in relation to retranslations is that, over time, they will tend to foreignize more and thus more faithfully reflect the source language and culture because these have gradually

become better known and understood by readers. This could certainly be the case with the translations of the work of the Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami, whose initial perceived exoticism is now much less relevant to his reception as his books have become increasingly successful in translation and the cultural mindset of these texts has come to seem more and more familiar to Western readers, thus assisting his current reception as a canonical figure in World Literature. Nevertheless, in most cases there is no guarantee that the first translation will domesticate or that subsequent retranslations will tend to foreignize. Instead, the aforementioned case studies have shown that both of these types of translations are subject to complex circumstances such as the prevalent literary and translational style of the historical period, the way in which translators interpret the source text, and their knowledge of the target culture. These procedures are often related to translational traditions and styles. For example, Spanish translations from the eighteenth and a great deal of nineteenth century often domesticated much more than subsequent translations (Lafarga 1999), regardless of whether or not they were the first translations or retranslations, and thus habitually opted for the domestication of proper names, toponyms, gastronomic terms or other such cultural references. However, during the twentieth century, this type of domestication came to be antiquated and, therefore, this perceived stylistic defect motivated retranslations. Therefore, the relation between translation procedures such as domestication and foreignization to retranslation would seem to be much more varied and unpredictable than one would infer from the categorical affirmation made in this respect by the RH.

As stated previously, retranslation may occur due to a genuine need to update antiquated and/or potentially offensive language. Specifically, an old translation may now seem politically incorrect to a quite worrying extent in terms of its approach to racial or sexual language, and this is clearly a translational issue which is sure to develop exponentially in the times of *Me Too* and *Black Lives Matter*. Other habitual reasons for the retranslations of literary texts include a greater freedom to translate a text faithfully as in the case of those versions produced during and after a dictatorship, to respond to the appearance of a significantly revised edition of the source text, or simply a desire on the part of the translator to offer a new and presumably more satisfactory or creative version of a text. We can also find the case of retranslations produced in the same language but for different markets, such as the case of peninsular Spanish and Latin American Spanish versions of texts. This disparity can sometimes produce sharply contrasting receptions e.g. the translation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* which was erroneously attributed to Jorge Luis Borges was significantly more influential for Latin America readers in general, and

Argentinian ones in particular, than for peninsular Spanish readers. Indeed, the immense literary prestige of the putative translator was and remains a key factor in Kafka's reception among this readership. Over the past decade, there have been some notable instances of radical reworkings that have tended to modify the long entrenched reception of certain canonical works, such as the 2014 English retranslation of the *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, replete with all of the original bloodthirsty horror which was previously deemed unsuitable for English-speaking children,⁴ or the paradigmatic case of the long overdue 2009 English retranslation of Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, whose first disastrously inept and incomplete translation was made in 1953 by a professor of zoology with a conspicuously limited knowledge of French, and thus provided a decisive contribution to an extremely prolonged distorted reception of the text in the English-speaking world, despite its canonical status as a foundational feminist text.⁵ In the aforementioned case of the hypertranslated Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, for many decades after his death the only German translations available were those made by one Enrique Beck. Beck, who most certainly was not previously noted for his proficiency as a literary translator, was very generously given the exclusive rights to the German translations from 1945 onwards due to a personal recommendation made to the Lorca family by no less a literary figure than Thomas Mann. When one of Lorca's nephews travelled to Germany to study for a PhD during the 1950s, the family discovered to their horror that the German versions were quite extraordinarily overtranslated in a notably melodramatic and stereotypical fashion in order to respond the supposed requirement for passionate, Latin stereotypes.⁶

In summary, retranslation is a very complex phenomenon, which depends on social and historical evolutions in each target culture, on considerations

4 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/12/grimm-brothers-fairytales-horror-new-translation> (Accessed 16 November 2020).

5 The deficiencies in the translation were soon noted by scholars, but the book's American publishers Knopf continuously refused to authorize a new translation, despite the fact that Simone de Beauvoir herself personally requested this in 1985. Knopf finally relented and commissioned Constance Borde and Sheila Malonay-Chevallier to make a new translation which, as stated previously, was published in 2009.

6 Although Beck died in 1974 as a Swiss national, he left a foundation in his name in Switzerland, which managed the exclusivity and the royalties from the translations, donating a part of the profits to Amnesty International, even though his own publishers, Strausfeld, were keen for other German translations of Lorca to appear. The problem was not resolved until 1988, when a court in Germany accepted the request of the Lorca estate to allow other translations, and new and hopefully less clichéd versions of *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* [The House of Bernarda Alba] and *Bodas de Sangre* [Blood Wedding] were finally made available to German-speaking readers.

about what author or work should be included in the concept of *Weltliteratur* or the literary canon, on the evolution of national translational traditions or styles, on commercial strategies, prestigious endorsements, and the inevitably unpredictable question of the awarding of major literary prizes. All of these contextual aspects of retranslation are inextricably linked to reception, as we will see in the studies in a European literary context presented in the following chapters of this book.

3 Reception

The term ‘reception’ is used nowadays in many fields, and often this use is neither consistent nor broad enough. It is frequently found in disciplines such as Media and Cultural Studies, Classical and Biblical Studies, and Literary and Audience Studies, fields which use quite different perspectives and methodologies (Willis 2018: 2–3). In this book, we concentrate specifically on literary texts and thus we use the term ‘reception’ firstly, in relation to its original theoretical background and secondly, amplifying its meaning in order to apply it to more recent evolutions or research possibilities such as reader response surveys. In terms of the early conceptualisation of Reception Theory, it is possible to distinguish between two main intellectual traditions and historical periods: the first composed of German scholars belonging to the *Constance School* and its theory of *Rezeptionsästhetik* [aesthetic of reception] from the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards, and the second one formed by their Anglophone counterparts during the 1970s and 1980s, which was known as reader response criticism (Willis 2018: 4). Both of these schools have in common “the conviction that texts do not produce meanings by themselves” (Middeke 2012: 191). One of the pioneering theorists in this field was undoubtedly the German Hans-Robert Jauss, who developed the concept of *Rezeptionsästhetik*. The focus placed by this theory on the reader meant a paradigm shift in literary studies, as Jauss proposed that the relationship between text and reader was a communicative action that concluded by reading and interpreting the text. Thus, the text would only truly begin to exist when it is read or interpreted by an individual reader or a collective readership, since Jauss argued that the meaning of a text “is extracted only during the progressive process of its reception” (1982: 59). Based on the principles of Information Theory, “the idea of ‘reception’ suggests a sender (an author), a message (a text) and a receiver (a reader), but it also implies that there must be a communication system which facilitates the sending and receiving of the message (Willis 2018: 5). This communication system

is part of a specific historical and cultural context and, therefore, the interpretations of a literary work can change depending on the time and place in which it is read (Jauss 1973: 169). This aspect is especially relevant for retranslation. According to Lawrence Venuti, those texts which are most likely to be translated are those with the greatest cultural authority and, in this respect, he cites the examples of the Bible, Homer's *Odyssey*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the works of Shakespeare, or Cervantes's two volumes of *Don Quixote*. Venuti further claims that "different readerships in the receiving culture may have different interpretations, and may want to apply their own values to the text." (2004: 36). A particularly salient example of the changing nature of reception could be provided by the diverse and historically evolving interpretation of *Don Quixote* in different literary cultures. Cervantes's eponymous hero has variously been read as a pathetic figure of satirical fun by the book's contemporary Spanish readers, an example of novelistic character creation wherein reality and fantasy found the perfect symbiosis by the German Romantics of the eighteenth century, a tragic, Romantic figure by nineteenth century French writers, and latterly the protagonist of an ironic and playful postmodern deconstruction of literary genre by modern English-speaking intellectuals. This notable disparity reveals the crucial importance of each particular reader's reception or interpretation in the construction of meaning from a literary text, and how much this fundamentally changes across time and between cultures, and when seen through the lens of different literary considerations or movements.

Jauss also introduced the term *Erwartungshorizont* [horizon of expectations] to define the set of cultural norms, previous cultural assumptions and criteria that inform and condition the way in which readers understand and judge a literary work at any given time in history. As mentioned previously, Jauss claimed that the value of a literary text depends on its reception by the reader, and not merely on the text itself. In fact, he believed that the evolution of a book's readership, rather than the specific historical period of its production and initial publication, could more fully explain the reception history of a literary text (Jauss 1973: 183). Another notable German scholar associated with the *Constance School of Reception* was Wolfgang Iser, who introduced several influential concepts within his own approach to Reception Theory.⁷ One of the most notable concepts in relation to reception is what he defined as *Leerstelle* [Textual Gaps]. According to Iser, texts merely provide a schematic structure

7 In his book *Der Akt des Lesens*, first edition 1976, he develops the concepts of *Wirkung* [effect] and *implizierter Leser* [implicit Reader], which had a notable influence on the theoretical formulations of the *Constance School*.

and thus leave many questions unresolved for the reader. Consequently, during the reading process the reader must fill in the gaps and construct the meaning of the text in a subjective and imaginative way. Essentially, Reception Theory posited that the text has no real meaning without its multiple readers and that it therefore follows that there can be no single, hegemonic reading of a text, but rather multiple, distinct and even conflicting and contradictory readings. The major representatives of the aforementioned *Reader-Response Criticism* approach to reception are Norman N. Holland and Stanley Fish. Holland (1975) explored the reception of literary texts from a psychoanalytical point of view, arguing that different interpretations of a text are based on previous individual experiences, which are mostly linked to childhood. According to Middeke (2012: 192), "Holland's assumption of a transaction between reader and text, therefore, can be delineated as a relationship which is regulated by a feedback structure in which the reading of the text enables the readers to re-create their prominent identities". In contrast to this essentially psychoanalytical approach, Fish (1980) developed theories related to reception which are notably more similar to those of Jauss and Iser, and agreed with them that previous reader expectations determine the interpretations of a literary text. In a similar vein to Jauss, he also considered that what conditions the interpretation of a text are individual lives experienced in a specific socio-cultural context.

As stated at the beginning of this section, reception studies are by no means limited to the field of literature, and the evolution of information technologies, social media, and Internet resources have broadened their scope and opened up many new interdisciplinary directions. Nonetheless, it is still possible to perceive a reciprocal influence between traditional reception studies and theories and these newer approaches. During the 1960s, 1970s, and even the 1980s, when Reception Studies were still in their infancy, access to the information needed to study the impact of a literary work was notably limited. Nowadays, on the contrary, it is much easier to access highly specific details about editions of the same text in different publishing houses, paratextual information published in the general press and in specialized journals, or academic reviews and studies of a particular literary text. Literary reception studies currently adopt several different approaches: there are still studies based on traditional textual analysis, in which the reader/researcher proposes an individual but solidly based interpretation of the text, in addition to a more contextual analysis about how and how much a literary work has been read since its first publication. Nowadays, it is axiomatic that reception studies are on the increase due to a vastly greater and easier access to information online, which allows researchers to learn more about the life of a literary work in a specific social, historical and cultural context.

4 Symbiosis

Reception, as we have seen, places the onus on the response of the reader to any written and/or translated text. Essentially, it shifts the focus from the original or source text and from the author/translator and places it squarely in the hands of the complicit reader. In this sense, to some extent it formed part of the whole *mise en scène* of the “death of the author” (propounded by Roland Barthes in his seminal 1967 essay with the same title) that some attributed to the radical re-readings and interpretations proposed by structuralism. Indeed, the special role of the translator in the communicative action between text and reader has been highlighted by different scholars (Hurtado 2001: 507–630, Rabadán 1991: 79–80, Enríquez Aranda 2007: 13–21), and Rosemary Arrojo (1997) has paid specific attention to what she termed “the death” of the author and its relation to the translator’s visibility. Firstly, the translator plays a double role: he or she is the reader / receiver of the source text and at the same time also the author / transmitter of the target text. Thus, what will be transmitted to the reader depends on his or her reading or interpretation of the translated text, because, according to Hurtado (2001: 41), translation is “un proceso interpretativo y comunicativo consistente en la reformulación de un texto con los medios de otra lengua” [an interpretative and communicative process which consists of the reformulation of a text through the means of another language]. Secondly, translation is a communicative action that is bound to or immersed in a specific socio-cultural context and, in this respect, Cadera (2017: 13) has written that “translations are the result of a translator’s decisions, individual style and rewriting mechanisms”, and that these translators “are living in a specific time where social events, current politics, aesthetic and literary movements or preferences dominate individual taste and publishing policies”. As can be observed, all of these aspects involved in the translation process are similar to those used by Reception Theory. In Translation Studies oriented towards reception, the challenge posed is to go back from the target text to the source text in order to analyse the translator’s decisions and his or her understanding of the source text, taking into account the historical and socio-cultural context of the period in which this translation was published. The existence of retranslations of the same source text opens up the possibility of analysing the different receptions of a specific text and author over time in a particular target culture, in order to assess the evolution through retranslation of the texts and authors in question.

In terms of the connection between the concepts of reception and translation as communicative actions in a specific context, Jauss made perhaps his most notable contribution to the relation of Reception Theory to retranslation

by postulating the aforementioned concept of the horizon of expectations and stating that “a literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period” (1982: 21). But what is the horizon of expectation of the reader of a translated and subsequently retranslated foreign text? This horizon obviously evolves and differs over time and from one generation to another, and can also be drastically changed due to modifications of the status of the author in the target culture. Rudyard Kipling and T. S. Eliot, for example, are tainted by their associations with racist imperialism and anti-Semitism respectively, which makes their reception through (re)translation increasingly problematic nowadays. On the contrary, certain writers who were relatively unknown during their lifetime are now growing in prestige and extending their international readership through translation, as in the cases of the Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño or the American short story writer Lucia Berlin, whereas authors who were once widely read and frequently (re)translated such as Pearl S. Buck (winner of the 1938 Nobel Prize) are now almost entirely forgotten and their works have long since been removed from publishers’ catalogues.

If we follow the theory posited by Jaus, the reader will approach a literary text predisposed towards it due to the previous knowledge and experience gained from reading other texts, perhaps from that same author or the same literary source culture. But retranslations can also influence both the actual and potential reception of a text or author in the target culture through the adoption of foreign aesthetics, literary devices, genres, literary conventions or styles, images, myths, conceptions or philosophical thinking or adopting norms, all of which will then find expression in the target literature. In theory, these previous readings will trigger a certain familiarity and/or predisposition which stems from the readership’s collective cultural expectations and the implicit and presumably accepted rules regarding the genre and the style. For example, a Sherlock Holmes story brings with it an enormous amount of previous cultural baggage both from literature itself, and from other analogous artistic representations such as cinema and television. This necessarily implies that reading is not, to cite Jaus’s terminology, an “autonomous, free and individual” experience but rather a set of mutual concepts that correspond to a given historical setting or personal background. Once again, we are faced with a seemingly unsolvable “chicken and egg” conundrum regarding the nature of the interaction between retranslation and reception. Does the former generate the latter or vice versa? Is the horizon of expectation of a literary work generated by the fact that a retranslation is considered necessary and/or commercially viable, or is this very horizon one of the fundamental reasons for the appearance of this retranslation? This is an epistemological problem of an almost

ontological nature. According to Even Zohar, members of the avant-garde are frequently responsible for translating, introducing and conditioning the subsequent reception of authors:

[...] often it is the leading writers (or members of the avant-garde who are about to become leading writers) who produce the most conspicuous or appreciated translations. Moreover, in such a state when new literary models are emerging, translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating the new repertoire. Through the foreign works, features (both principles and elements) are introduced into the home literature which did not exist there before.

1990: 46–47

This would seem to be pointing in the direction of a causal relationship between retranslation and reception, in which the former shapes the latter and therefore enjoys hegemonic status. However, when considering the nature of the symbiotic relationship between retranslation and reception we are dealing with a dichotomy whose very nature entails a perhaps insoluble conundrum: a changing reception will motivate retranslations, and retranslation in turn conditions and modifies reception. The interstices where this transformation takes place are almost impossible to identify with precision, but it is possible to analyse each side of the coin and provide examples of each symbiotic phenomenon, and it is these examples and this evidence that the following chapters seek to provide. The question we will seek to answer through these empirical studies is essentially a quite direct one: how does retranslation fit in with reception? Specifically, how does retranslation, whether frequent or with long historical gaps between each version, condition reception? What do retranslations say about reception? The heavily censored translations produced during a dictatorship will obviously achieve a notably different reception than subsequent retranslations in a free, democratic society. And in the case of an author who has fallen from grace for biographical and/or political reasons, if for example some disturbing facts have emerged about this author, the subsequent retranslations of his or her work are necessarily conditioned by this and will inevitably struggle to overcome the preconceptions brought to this text by an informed reader. There are, of course, some notable examples of the influence exerted by sustained retranslation on the reception of hypercanonical writers. For example, as stated previously, the reception of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* both in and out of Spain has been dramatically reshaped over the centuries that have passed since it was first published in 1606, and this novel and its author, frequently referenced as the founder of the modern novel

and the first outstanding example of metaliterature respectively, represent perhaps the paradigmatic case of a changing reception through retranslation. The same could also be argued for such canonical figures in English literature as Shakespeare and Jane Austen, whose literary prestige and reception in the literary system have fluctuated notably over the centuries. Nevertheless, some would argue that when a translation has been successful and influential it is extremely difficult to change the reception of an author/text with subsequent retranslations, and here we could invoke figures such as Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Federico García Lorca, whose reception has remained stubbornly attached to their initial, highly politicized mediation, as a notorious anti-Semite in the case of the former, and as a martyr for the Left in the case of the latter.

5 Conclusions

Evidently, the different theories of Reception can conceptually help us to advance in Translation Studies in general, but more specifically they can offer us even more applications in the field of Retranslation Studies. Different translations of the same literary work offer a very rich source of material to analyse reading and reception over the course of time. We have argued that there is a bidirectional relationship between retranslation and reception as we believe them to be mutually dependent concepts, a hypothesis that will be explored both empirically and theoretically in the following chapters of this book. Reception in relation to (re)translation occurs hereby on different levels. The act of translation itself is an act of reception, since each translator interprets the literary text in his or her own individual way and within his or her specific socio-historical and cultural context. In their preface to *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of the Literary Fame*, Bassnett and Lefevere (1992: vii) argued that translation must “necessarily be considered the rewriting of an original text and, therefore, it always implies a manipulation of this source text in order to facilitate its reception by the target cultural system”. Moreover, Lefevere (1992: 9) considered translations to be “the most influential form of rewriting as they project the image of an author and his or her work(s) in another culture and condition the subsequent reception”. Reformulating these statements from the perspective of reception, “manipulation” should be understood to be the translator’s reading and interpretation of the text and its rendering in the target language and culture. In this process, translators stand between two cultures, two languages, and two literary systems, and have the power to construct to a large extent the image not only of the original author but also of the source culture. If any translation is essentially an act

of reception, the analysis of retranslations offers us an opportunity to understand how literary works have been transmitted through time in different contexts. As we have seen, this kind of retranslation/reception studies are based on the first reception theories from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when Jauss and the members of the *Constance School* formulated their aesthetic of reception and concepts such as horizon of expectation or textual gaps, and this was also when the first formulations of reader response criticism appeared in the Anglophone world.

As mentioned previously, in the theoretical framework of both the *Constance School* and reader response criticism, the reader is understood to be both a receiver and an interpreter of the text. The text itself only acquires its meaning in the process of reading. In consequence, each translation of a literary work has to be understood as the result of this reception process, in which, on the one hand, an individual translator renders his or her version of the text in another language and, on the other hand, the specific socio-historical and cultural moment influences this translator's decisions. In the following sections of this book, the various authors will analyse different translations in order to ascertain how, over time, these versions have shaped the reception of literary works and their authors. As we have seen, over 200 years ago Goethe famously proclaimed the importance of translation for the creation of *World Literature*, but it was not until the 1990s when scholars advanced in Translation Studies towards a more systemic perspective on this phenomenon. In his frequently cited essay on "The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem", Even-Zohar made the following bold assertion to stake a claim for the hegemony of translation within a literary polysystem: "I conceive of translated literature not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as the most active system within it" (1990: 46). This would seem to be something of an overstatement in the case of a literary polysystem such as the English-speaking world, whose publishing market is characterized by the oft-quoted figure of 3 percent of literature in translation. Nevertheless, the point remains valid in terms of the activity of translation and retranslation within any given literary polysystem through the reception of foreign authors and their influence on domestic literature, which will be exemplified in the different chapters of this volume.

As stated previously, other directions in Reception Studies can also be applied to Retranslation Studies. With the evolution of information technologies, social media and Internet resources new methodologies of analysis have opened up vastly enhanced possibilities to learn about the impact of translations. Influenced by the audience studies which emerged in the 1990s with the growth of mass media and which were initially intended to focus on

commercial interests, scholars began to apply these same methodologies to cultural studies, film studies, or media studies in general (Willis 2018: 92–98). Although the use of Internet data for literary reception studies is still in its infancy, for Retranslation Studies, access to this type of data opens up some extraordinary new possibilities, as evinced by two chapters of this present volume. Online tools or chats, digital and digitalized journals and newspapers and even Social Media can provide qualitative and quantitative information about reader responses to new and older translations. Another innovative approach in this book in terms of Retranslation Studies is its analysis of the reception of paratextual elements such as the changing of images on the book cover or the practice of retitling earlier translations. Nevertheless, despite certain logical difference in terms of their scope and their capacity to generate empirical evidence, all of these approaches reveal the symbiotic relationship between retranslation and reception.

Essentially, the decision or even the need to retranslate is one which is inevitably bound to prevailing ideologies and values (as well as evidently commercial criteria), and most of the Translation Studies scholars cited above have concluded with differing degrees of conviction or certainty that the influence of the target text on the target culture can be reciprocal and thus work as a “two-way street” in the context of world literature. What we seek to achieve in the following pages is to address this critical conundrum and provide some empirical evidence in a European context of the nature of this symbiotic relationship. In this respect, we aim to shed some critical light on the following two questions: What is the nature of the horizon of expectation generated by the retranslation of a well-known or even canonical text? And how have retranslations shaped the evolution of an author’s reception in diverse target cultures?

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