

Retranslation, thirty years later / La retraduction, trente ans après

guest edited by Kris Peeters (UAntwerp) and Piet Van Poucke (Ghent University)

Call for papers

Retranslations (“second or later translation[s] of a single source text into the same target language”, Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 294) have been made ever since narratives and literature spread out over the borders of cultures. Nevertheless retranslation became a serious object of academic study only after 1990, when the journal *Palimpsestes* devoted its 4th volume to “Retraduire”. One of the contributors of that volume, Antoine Berman, wrote the opening article of the special issue, in which he raised a number of questions which still give orientation to most of the scholarly discussion thirty years later.

One of the issues Berman raised in his seminal 1990 paper, concerning the (alleged) tendency of retranslations to be ‘closer’ to the original than first translations, was also raised by Bensimon (1990) in his introduction and was later developed into the “Retranslation Hypothesis” (Chesterman, 2000). That hypothesis has attracted most of the attention devoted to retranslation. Dozens of case studies have shown since then that the Retranslation Hypothesis holds in only a number of cases, but is definitely no “universal”. Nonetheless, the Retranslation Hypothesis remains dominant in the field and continues to be explored through case studies analyzing different thematic or stylistic aspects in different source texts, language combinations and contexts. Although these cases are interesting and deserve to be analyzed, up to today little effort has been made at an encompassing synthesis. As a result, our knowledge of the specificity of retranslation as a phenomenon remains fragmented, and the necessary conceptualisation is still lacking, as was emphasized by Alvstad and Rosa: “(t)his endeavor has been only partially embraced by scattered studies that address the relation to previous translations, different source texts, revisions, new editions, reprints, adaptations, backtranslation or indirect translation, or that consider broad and specific contextual influences and constraints” (2015, p. 8).

Other claims made by Bensimon and Berman in 1990, about the (alleged) “ageing” of translated and retranslated texts as opposed to original texts, and on retranslation as a prerequisite for what Berman called a “great translation” (“une grande traduction”) have attracted less scholarly attention. As a consequence, some characteristics of retranslation and some questions related to the phenomenon are still understudied. In general, the majority of studies on retranslation so far have focused their attention, either on the motives for retranslation, trying to answer the WHY? question, or on confirming or denying the Retranslation Hypothesis for the specific cases studied, thus limiting the HOW? question to a single aspect and a single case. Far less time and energy were spent on other questions related

to the HOW?, or the WHERE?, WHEN?, and WHO?. With this volume we would like to fill in a number of those gaps by taking a closer and more encompassing look at the retranslators and the product of their work – retranslation as a phenomenon, in order to answer the crucial question “what actually happens in retranslating” (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 295).

Contributors are invited to develop perspectives on retranslation that address these understudied questions, *while exceeding the level of a single case study*.

Possible research questions include, but are not restricted to the following:

- What have we learnt from the case studies of the past thirty years, in terms of retranslations’ specificity, as opposed to first (or earlier) translations?
- Do the research results from case studies invite a reformulation of the Retranslation Hypothesis? How can or should it be reformulated to be more accurate?
- To what extent can the binary hypothesis opposing first translations to retranslations be useful to discuss the ever growing corpus of third, fourth, etc. translations into the same language, that is, the growing number of translated texts that are both retranslations and earlier translations?
- In what way do retranslations typically differ from first or previous translations? Are there characteristics which all retranslations have in common? What characteristics do they have in common with all translations, including first translations?
- Is it possible, starting from the wealth of existing case studies, to describe with more accuracy what ‘closer to the original’ or a ‘more faithful’ translation actually means?
- Is it true that retranslations are generally more ‘faithful’ to the original? Are retranslations in general more ‘faithful’ to the content or the style? Can they also be more ‘faithful’ to the content *and* style? How do retranslators themselves define such ‘fidelity’?
- Do retranslators use the available previous translations and are they supposed to do that? How can we trace the “voice” of the previous translator(s) in a retranslation?
- Do canonical literary works attract more experienced translators who try to produce a “great translation” of a previously translated literary work? Who are these retranslators and in what way are they different from translators in general?
- Which agents take part in the process of retranslation? Who orders a retranslation? What part is being played by the translators themselves, by publishing houses, by journalists, by literary institutions? Is there a connection between canonicity, copyright and commercial profitability?
- Who decides whether a retranslation is a “great translation” and what are characteristics of such a retranslation that justify the claim of “greatness”?
- What is the effect of a retranslation on the readers? Do critics compare retranslations with previous translations and how do they judge the differences?
- Is the occurrence of retranslation context-specific, in other words, are there geographical or cultural contexts in which retranslation holds a more central position than in other contexts?
- What are the reasons behind the non-retranslation of certain texts? What kind of texts are never retranslated?

- Is it correct that the 21st Century is the “Age of Retranslation” (as claimed by Collombat, 2004) and why is that the case?

Publication schedule

The selection of contributions will take place in two stages: first, the guest editors welcome proposals in the form of an abstract of maximum 500 words accompanied by a brief bio-bibliographical note; after the pre-selection of proposals according to their interest, their quality and the general balance of the envisaged issue, we will invite the selected researchers to send us their full contributions, which will be subjected to a double blind evaluation.

Proposals for contributions, maximum 500 words, in French or English, accompanied by a brief bio-bibliographical note (100 words), should be sent by **1 October 2021** to Kris Peeters (kris.peeters@uantwerpen.be) and Piet Van Poucke (piet.vanpoucke@ugent.be). The guest editors will inform the authors of their decisions by 15 November 2021.

The final papers (between 4000 and 8000 words, including the abstract, footnotes, bibliography and annexes, if applicable) should be submitted by **1 March 2022** for double blind review. For the writing of the manuscript, authors are requested to use the model document, which also contains important information on the submission protocol, to be found at: <https://www.paralleles.unige.ch/en/consignes/>. If appropriate, authors are requested to have their manuscripts proofread by a native speaker.

Acceptance of papers will be notified by 1 June 2022. Reworked papers should be submitted by **15 July 2022**.

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