Introduction

Translation Studies Meets World Literature

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For a long time translation was a Cinderella subject, marginalised, patronised or simply ignored by literary theorists. The advent of a new field called Translation Studies did little to change the perception of translation as a second-class, derivative activity, inferior to so-called original writing and hence less worthy of attention. But as Translation Studies developed and diversified through the 1980s and 1990s, it began to become apparent that some of the core concerns of this new field were highly relevant to another new and expanding field, postcolonial studies, and to the revitalised fields of Comparative and World Literature. Today there is a confluence of all these fields, concerned as they are with the ways in which texts move across cultures and with the transformations those texts undergo in the process of movement. Since the field's inception in the late 1970s, researchers in Translation Studies have, like their colleagues in World Literature, studied patterns of textual transmission, exploring the diverse fortunes of texts at different moments in time as they cross into other languages and other cultural contexts. At the same time, the growth of global perspectives among comparatists has fostered new attention to questions going well beyond the handful of languages that a person can learn, and at the same time comparatists have begun to look with new interest into the ways in which the wider world enters a given literary space through translation. A natural result of these developments has been to unite scholars starting from a World Literature perspective and those starting from within Translation Studies. Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, Georg Brandes was sceptical both about translations and about world literature. Not only did he view translation as linguistically imperfect, inherently failing to do justice to the original, but he also had a negative view of the role played by translation in

international canon-formation, noting that the privileging of a few hegemonic languages meant that “the writers of the world’s various lands are not equally apportioned with respect to world renown” (25). This prescient remark prefigures some of the contemporary debates about the forces behind the movement of texts, forces that are not only aesthetic but also social, political, and economic. World Literature scholarship has concerned itself with exploring different aspects of these forces, but has tended to neglect one of the most powerful forces of all: translation.

Translation Studies scholarship, on the other hand, has endeavoured to raise the profile and visibility of translation and translators, but has tended to focus too narrowly on written texts, at the expense of investigating the broader network of agencies involved in the production and dissemination of translations, which include publishers, patrons, copy-editors, censors, and many others.

This development has led translation theorists such as Siri Nergaard and Edwin Gentzler to use the term “post-translation studies” to distinguish a new focus today on the circulation of texts within and across cultures. Post-translation studies, a deliberately provocative term recalling the coinage of “post-feminism” a few years ago, proposes that older definitions of translation as interlingual transfer no longer hold, and that sharp distinctions between originals, translations, versions, and rewritings need to be jettisoned. This is particularly pertinent in our age of mass media, which is witnessing the advent of a variety of new forms—blogs, fan fiction, social media sites—at an unprecedented speed, forms that coexist with more traditional modes of expression.

André Lefevere was also concerned with problems of definition, and sought to relabel translation as “rewriting.” He argued that translations, literary histories, anthologies, reference books, criticism, reviews, and editions all involve textual manipulation and adaptation in accordance with dominant ideological and poetological currents of the age. Today, one strand of research in Translation Studies is taking that argument further and investigating the multiple agencies involved in intercultural textual transmission. In addition to research into translated texts and their translators, there is a growing body of work that is looking at paratexts, at editions, at publishing strategies both diachronically and synchronically, at explicit and implicit censorship, and at the mechanics of textual distribution, all under the aegis of Translation Studies. Similar lines of research are taking place under the aegis of Comparative or World Literature, and here the extent of the confluence can be seen.

What seems to be happening today is that World Literature scholarship has started to acknowledge the fundamental importance of translation as a shaping force in literary history, and at the same time Translation Studies scholarship

is moving out beyond linguistic and stylistic analysis to explore the broader sociological, political, and economic implications of translation in relation to other types of text. This necessarily involves questioning the very terminology of translation, and means also that we can finally bridge the divide which opened up in the 1990s between Translation Studies and postcolonial studies over whether the terminology of translation could be used metaphorically to discuss migration and exile. Both fields study the ways in which texts as well as people migrate within and across global trade routes.

One regular meeting place for Translation Studies and World Literature today is at the annual sessions of the Institute for World Literature, where seminars, lectures, and colloquia are regularly given on issues of translation in world perspective. An affiliate of this journal, the IWL is responsible for generating the third of the journal's four issues each year, and we have chosen "Translation Studies Meets World Literature" as the theme for this inaugural IWL-based issue. Two of the essays included here, by Susan Bassnett and Gisèle Sapiro, stem from plenary lectures given at sessions of the IWL in 2013 and 2014, respectively, and the other essays are by IWL participants from 2013–2015. Each year, IWL faculty and participants will provide a core of essays for our annual issue, but submissions are welcome as well from anyone interested in contributing on the year's topic. For issue 2:3 in 2017, the topic will be "Ultraminor Literatures," and for issue 3:3 in 2018, the topic will be "Debating World Literature: Critiques and Responses." Descriptions of these topics and calls for submissions will be found on the IWL website (IWL).

The present issue brings together a varied group of essays probing the migration of texts across languages and borders, beginning with Susan Bassnett's essay on the emergence of the figure of the translator into new visibility worldwide as a creative artist and critical interpreter. Next come two essays with a Brazilian focus. Isabel Gómez probes the conflicting translational strategies and values seen in a Spanish translation of Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* and its editorial framing; Jonathan Fleck then discusses the problematic politics of race and representation in Antonio Risério's *Oriki Orixá*, a book of retranslations of Yoruba *oriki* poetry. Then come a pair of essays with a focus in global translational flows to or from the Middle East. Nazry Bahrawi's "A Thousand and One Rewrites" looks at ways to approach rewritings of the classic Arabic text by Edgar Allan Poe, Naguib Mahfouz, and Hanan Al-Shaykh. Esmaeil Haddadian-Moghaddam then analyzes unpublished archival material on the US-sponsored Franklin Book Programs in postwar Iran, arguing that this ambitious publishing venture didn't only serve the interests of hegemonic American diplomacy but introduced a range of world literature into Iran in high-quality translations, with a stimulating effect on the Iranian market itself.

Haddadian-Moghaddam's sociological focus on the agents of publication and dissemination of translations is found as well in the next two essays, centered in Europe. Gisèle Sapiro gives the results of her research in the archives of Gallimard to examine the ways in which Faulkner was introduced into the French market, while Anca Baicoianu analyzes the aesthetic and cultural-political factors behind a remarkably ambitious series devoted to Vladimir Nabokov by the young Romanian publishing house Polirom. Finally, Diana Hitzke unpacks the dizzying translational dynamic of a German re-translation of a Serbian adaptation of a German novel by Thomas Bernhard.

Taken together, these eight essays give a good picture of the lively dialogue of Translation Studies and World Literature today, combining aesthetics and politics, hermeneutic and sociological perspectives, in new and exciting ways. The American translator Edith Grossman has argued that translation "plays an inimitable, essential part in the expansion of literary horizons through multilingual fertilization," adding that a multilingual community of writers would be inconceivable without translation (22). This is indeed the case, and even a cursory glance at the literary history of societies around the world shows that translation in various manifestations of the word has played a significant role in introducing new ideas, new forms, and at times a wholly new aesthetic into another cultural system. Acknowledging the importance of that role means that translation, the Cinderella subject, can at last walk into the ballroom and hold her own in the dance.

Works Cited

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