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Translation, Intertextuality, and Canon-Formation as Literary Cultural Memory

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Abstract

Reviewing some of the definitions of cultural memory, the present study tries to examine the ways in which cultural memory and literature are related. Accordingly, the author proposes to look at intertextuality, canon-formation, and translation as the three media of cultural memory. While previous theoretical studies on the relevance of cultural memory to literature have often been conceded to psychologism, one contention of the present essay is to emphasize the cultural afterlife of texts as a more plausible site of literary cultural memory. Also, rather than the formalist qualities of intertextuality and translation, their cultural mnemonic role are highlighted. Finally, drawing on two loan words in translation studies, the otherness of cultural memory is argued to be a semiotic process similar to translative foreignization. The relationship between cultural memory as a text to receive culture is similar to the relationship between the source text and the target text within the problematic of domestication/foreignization in translation studies.

Keywords: cultural memory, intertextuality, canon-formation, translation, foreignization, domestication

Introduction

“To begin with, there must be a will to remember.” (Nora, “Memory and History” 19)

There are at least two ways to define cultural memory: as collectivization of individual memory, and as objectification of historical experience on a grand scale. When we remember, we tend to do two things: re-member, that is, assemble certain images or events into a relatively coherent episode or narrative, and re-focalize a phenomenon in the past whose significance might not have been perceived prior to the act of remembrance. Memory as sign and remembering as semiosis involve absence and presence. While the remnants and ruins of the past are brought back to the light of the present, undesired presences are often pushed back into passive memory. This repression-expression model, however, is based on the assumption that memory is a purely individual phenomenon.

Memory seems something intensely private, a property of the individual. John Locke, an empiricist philosopher whose work can be taken to reflect a modern paradigm shift on the topic, understood memory to be the power of the mind “to revive perceptions, which it once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before” (Whitehead, *Memory* 150). In this view, memory is regarded as a capacity of recalling to mind specific events that an individual witnessed or in which he or she was personally involved. However, recent studies have emphasized the para-individual dimension of memory, and thus challenged the idea of looking at mind as blank slate to be inscribed by memory. It is this aspect of remembering which is most germane to literary cultural memory, and perhaps not a psychological view of memory *in* literature.

In the following section, the study tries to present some of the definitions of cultural memory in order to prepare the ground for investigating the possible ways in which cultural memory could be integrated with literary studies. Accordingly, three concepts are suggested to have the potential for creating such an interdisciplinary dialogue, namely, intertextuality, canon-formation, and translation.

The relationship between culture and memory has arisen in different fields of study like history, sociology, art, philosophy, theology, and psychology in the last twenty years. In this manner, the humanities, social studies, and the natural studies have come to enter into an interdisciplinary dialogue with each other. The importance of the concept of cultural memory can be documented by attempts to synthesize different research traditions as well as by the vast amount of publication on social, religious, or family memories since the late 1980s. The high number of journals and research centers dedicated to the study of memory is testimony to the growing significance of this travelling concept in the humanities. Ironically, the emphasis on memory also reflects the anxiety of amnesia.

Cultural memory is an umbrella term that includes the study of mediatized remembering, myth, museums and monuments, conversational remembering, and configurations of cultural knowledge and heritage among other things. For many, one of the advantages of the concept of “cultural memory” in comparison to say “myth”, “tradition”, and “transindividual memory”, which would have appeared to refer to the same phenomena, is the former’s inclusiveness and potentiality for interdisciplinarity (Erll, “Introduction” 1). However, there is sometimes the feeling that the concept is so loose that almost everything could come under the research topic of Cultural Memory Studies (henceforth CMS).

Broadly speaking, we could make a preliminary analytical distinction between four types of memory within CMS, all of which refer to the external (contra internal/psychologized) dimensions of remembering: mimetic memory (which refers to action), memory of things (objects that remind us of who we are, known also as mnemonic objects), communicative memory (intergenerational memory that is performed through language and other means of interpersonal/intersubjective communication), and cultural memory (an area where the other three merge). When the routine imitations gain the status of rituals, and when a meaning and significance goes beyond its practical functions, imitative action memory boundaries are exceeded. Rituals enter the field of cultural memory as a form of transferring and cultivating cultural meaning (*Cultural Memory* 6). Through iteration and semiosis, different types of memory (i.e., mimetic, object-memory, and communicative) might turn into cultural memory.

Cultural memory has been known by many other names: social, collective, collected, shared, etc. What unites all these designations is the shift from a memory bound by individual consciousness to an emphasis on socio-cultural determinants, or as is assumed in this study, the textual-semiotic delineations of memory and practices of remembrances. For Astrid Erll, cultural memory “can serve as an umbrella term which comprises “*social* memory” (the starting point for memory research in the social sciences), “*material* or *medial* memory” (the focus of interest in literary and media studies), and “*mental* or *cognitive* memory” (the field of expertise in psychology and the neurosciences)” (“Introduction” 4). Although these demarcations can be considered as provisional and are hence necessary, there is certainly great overlap between the social, material, and cognitive, both conceptually and pragmatically.

The landmark work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s can be taken to represent the shift from individual to collective memory. In *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (*The Social Contexts of Memory*), Halbwachs studied the relationship between the beliefs held by individuals and the collective memory of the various groups to which they belonged. It was found out that the seemingly personal memories of individuals were strongly shaped by socio-cultural denominators. According to Halbwachs, it is only in dreams that individuals recall images freed from social constructions and meanings. However, this idea was problematized by Freudian psychoanalysis. Apart from that, our understanding of the past depends on our relations with the groups we belong to. “It is not in memory but in the dream that the mind is most removed from society” (42).

Halbwachs' understanding of the inevitable contemporaneity of the past is hermeneutically justified because all forms of relations and for that matter understanding are situated in a diachronic temporal horizon. The idea that an image of the past is always constructed in the shades of "the predominant thoughts of society" might appear to once again jolt us into the deep and dark abyss of postmodern-poststructuralist skepticism towards any form of historical knowledge. Yet, the problem is not always that of truth and accessibility to a seemingly authentic historical veracity, but rather the uses of such an archival re-presenting, in other words, not of ontology/epistemology but of pragmatism/use. Instead of bemoaning the loss of an untainted historical past – which is an abstraction in the first place – it is the task of the analyst to examine the ways in which the contemporary rewrites the past. One should pay attention to the forms and modalities of narrating historical past as a way of bringing to the fore the effect of contemporary discourses on such a narration. In the above quotation, we should also emphasize the dialectical relationship between acts of collective remembrance and memory. It is not that there is an individual memory which is then by the sheer will of the subject materialized and gradually transferred onto the collective sphere; without one the other does not exist. The material, symbolic, and textual sites of collective memory are in fact the only possible ways for the circulation of memory in the public sphere. One important connotation of this claim is that even sites and places of memory require a semiotic-discursive field for having any meaningful relation to human subjects.

While Halbwachs' concept of "collective memory" has ushered in various other contributions, it has also drawn some criticism. For Astrid Erll, the term triggers many wrong associations in those who are new to the field [of CMS] ("Introduction 3-4). Moreover, "collective memory" seems to oppose itself to "cultural memory" as understood by Jan Assmann because of the former's overlook of the medial traditions, transmissions, and transferences of memory. In other words, in comparison to *collective* memory, *cultural* memory has the advantage of taking into consideration the cultural sphere in which remembering occurs ("Communicative and Cultural Memory" 110).

It is important to be aware that the concepts of "cultural" or "collective" memory are essential metaphoric constructions. Here, the concept of "remembering" is figuratively transferred to the level of culture. In this sense, scholars mention a "nation's memory", "religious community's memory", or "literature's memory". Moreover, we need to differentiate between two levels on which culture and memory intersect: the individual, which is concerned with biological memory, and the collective, which refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices. In fact, there is no purely individual memory. All memories are shaped by collective contexts and situations of utterance. As Jan Assmann says, "Things do not 'have' a memory of their own, but they may remind us, may trigger our memory, because they carry memories which we have invested into them, things such as dishes, feasts, rites, images, stories and other texts, landscapes, and other 'lieux de memoire'" (111). Hence, we could speak of mnemo-objects, mnemo-texts, and mnemo-sites.

To speak of *sites of memory* (*lieux de mémoire*) leads us to another important figure in CMS, namely Pierre Nora. Less than being an unambiguous notion, *lieux de mémoire* has two different functions in Nora's writings:

Sometimes it is used literally to refer to features of topography: Lascaux, Versailles, the Eiffel Tower, street names. At other times it is employed figuratively to refer to tokens of cultural identity: the *Marseillaise*, Bastille Day, gastronomy, the memoirs of Chateaubriand, Stendhal and Poincaré. (Connerton 39)

Here, Nora emphasizes sites of commemoration (e.g., museums, cathedrals, cemeteries), cultural artifacts (e.g., literary texts, monuments, heritage), and memorial practices within a national (French) imaginary (e.g., rituals). What can be gained from the notion of sites of memory, both in its topographic and figurative senses, for literary-cultural studies can be categorized into on the one hand examining the representation of memory-topos in cultural products including literary works, and on the other analyzing literary products themselves as memory-figures. While the first approach would trace

recurring forms, images, symbols, etc. in literature, the second would be dealing with the materiality of literature itself, that is, how a book circulates in the market (the reception side of literary and cultural communication).

An important aspect of cultural memory is its communicative function. Indeed, cultural memory is the link which makes the past speak to the present across temporal and spatial distances (“Canon and Archive” 97). However, the transference of cultural memory onto the contemporary sphere becomes possible only when there is some degree of forgetting. As Aleida Assmann puts it, “The dynamics of individual memory consists in a perpetual interaction between remembering and forgetting. In order to remember some things, other things must be forgotten”. Psychological pressures and socio-political constraints determine what is remembered and for that matter what is forgotten.

Jan and Aleida Assmann’s theory of cultural memory is among the most influential. The Assmanns argue that memory is both communicative and cultural. In this view, “What communication is for communicative memory, tradition is for cultural memory” (*Religion* 8). Put differently, tradition, a term not very cherished in contemporary theoretical discourses, is the channel or communication medium of cultural memory. Moreover, Jan Assmann emphasizes the textual nature of cultural memory. According to him, cultural memory is “that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose cultivation serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image” (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 112). In this view, cultivation or adaptation in its broadest sense is considered a way of collective self-definition, a mirror for representing and readjusting identity.

For Jan Assmann, cultural memory gathers momentum around fixed points in time, what he calls “fateful events”, whose memory is preserved through “cultural formation” and “institutional communication” (118). He tellingly calls this process “crystallization” around certain “figures of memory” (e.g., monuments, literary works, commemorative practices). “Figures of memory”, which will be used in this thesis, is a suggestive term because it describes products of cultural memory as open to interpretation and underlines that these can be repurposed (e.g., adapted and appropriated) according to the “identity need” that Assmann ascribes to collective imaginaries (115). While most contemporary literary studies claim to do CMS, their psychologism, that is, limiting themselves to neuronal aspects of memory especially in trauma studies, contradicts Jan Assmann’s understanding of cultural memory.

Of particular significance in Jan Assmann’s conceptualization of cultural memory is the way in which memory and collective identity are related. He notes that,

Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive (“We are this”) or in a negative sense (“That’s our opposite”). (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* 130)

In other words, there is a process of self-definition and othering in imagining cultural memory, not dissimilar to the process of domestication and foreignization in translation.

Jan Assmann’s theory of cultural memory has been elaborated and specified by his wife Aleida Assmann. On the basis of diverse cultural heritage of modern and contemporary Europe, Aleida Assmann proceeds with a discrete analysis of functions, media, and storage of memory and proposes a number of significant conceptual distinctions. First, she distinguishes the three dimensions of memory called respectively neuronal, social, and cultural memory. “Social memory”, as understood by her, is more or less synonymous with Jan Assmann’s “communicative memory” – it stays alive for 80-100 years on average, and is handed on biologically via communication. “Cultural memory”, on the other hand, is communicated with the help of material means, it is temporally unlimited, and signs and symbols are employed for handing it on.

In Assmanns’ theory, communicative memory is “limited with temporal horizon [and has] no fixed points” (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 116). Hence, Jan Assmann writes that this

temporal horizon “does not extend more than eight to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past, which equals three or four generations or the Latin *saeculum*”. Communicative memory (aka “everyday memory”) which is practiced in daily life, but since it has no “fixed points” such as rites, monuments, or texts, it lasts as long as it is needed by the existing generation. In contrast to this, cultural memory is “distanced from the everyday” and has its own fixed points. The “faithful events of the past [...] and the institutional communication” is called “figures of memory” in Jan Assmann’s theory, which guarantee the continuity of mnemonic connection to the past (118).

The above distinctions can be complemented by those made in Paul Ricoeur’s phenomenology of memory in his magnum opus, *Memory, History, Forgetting (La Mémoire, l’Histoire, l’Oubli)*. Building on Plato, Aristotle, Bergson, and Halbwachs, Ricoeur argues that the difference between *mneme* and *anamnesis* is at the heart of Western understanding of memory. Sidestepping the opposition between presence and absence (in Derridean sense), and also resisting neurobiological-psychological reduction, Ricoeur writes that, “If we can blame memory for lacking reliability, it is precisely because it is our only and unique resource to signify the past-character of what we claim to remember” (26). Put differently, memory and remembering are the same thing; there is no subject-object dualism in this view.

In Ricoeur’s phenomenology of memory, memory and imagination are closely linked: they both contain the presence of something absent. However, unlike idealist Cartesian views, the phenomenological lesson here is to think of memory (and imagination) as possessing an objectal trait. One does not just remember, but rather remembers *something*. Hence, there is memory as an aim (*visée*) (act and action) and remembrance as the thing aimed at (*le souvenir comme chose visée*) (39).

A key term in Ricoeur’s phenomenology of memory is “trace”, which could be employed for theorizing intertextuality as cultural memory. Ricoeur makes a distinction between three types of traces: the written trace, or the trace document, in the context of historiography; the psychic trace, an intimate one, an exterior one, that is, the impression caused by an important event; and the cortical trace, an exterior one, which is the domain of neuroscience. The issue of forgetfulness and for that matter remembrance is played out on the juxtaposition of the second and the third types of traces. The second is related to the effacement of traces, a type of deep forgetfulness, the third is more hidden; one talks about them only retrospectively and in relation to specific experiences. Hence, these traces are not erased, but made inaccessible. According to Ricoeur, “to think the trace, one should think it both as an effect of the present and a sign of its absent cause. However, in the material trace, there is no otherness, no absence. Everything in it is a positivity and a presence” (552).

Intertextuality as Cultural Memory

As a concept in literary and cultural studies, intertextuality first emerged in Julia Kristeva’s writings in the 1960s. Kristeva maintains that any text is actually “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in a space of a given text,” in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (36). From such a perspective, texts are seen as “lacking in any kind of independent meaning” (Allen i).

Mikhail Bakhtin, who can be considered the true harbinger of the idea of intertextuality, writes that,

At any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between different epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. (291)

The question arises as to the ways in which intertextuality as a broad category of literary and cultural quality could be related to cultural memory. More specifically, whether it is possible to look at

intertextuality as a site of cultural memory, a space where the voices of the past and the present interact in a fugue.

Renate Lachmann's theory of intertextuality in *Memory and Literature* considers literature as playing an important role in recording and contributing to cultural memory. Her theory fosters a study of literature that traces the ways in which the mechanisms of forgetting and remembering in literature construct cultural memory by presenting images of how we may conceptualize the past. She argues that intertextuality has the potential to free meaning and history from any "obligation to perpetuate monologicunivocality" that persists in official narratives (39). Moreover, in her view, approaching the past as a collectively shared experience and representations of the past as a means of recalling the absent and the forgotten rather than preserving the material trace (in Ricoeurian sense) contributes to a broadly inclusive cultural memory. It also helps us to find a new language to talk about the past that, although initially unfamiliar, will "strike the next generation as inevitable" (Lachmann, *Memory and Literature* 29).

Lachman's theory of memory and literature rests on intertextuality, which she defines as "the contact between texts literary and non-literary" that produces a "semantic interchange", builds relationships between texts to open up new meanings, encourages multiple voices, and promotes "a text's inexhaustible potential" (Lachman, *Memory and Literature* 36). In this view, intertextuality operates as externalized memory, mirroring neurological memory where the brain links fragments of images to create a memory narrative. Literature in turn links fragments from other texts and sources, uses reference signals that allow the reader to identify the referent text, and thus, creates a dialogue that enriches all the texts with new meaning. Put differently, meaning is not located in the text by itself but in the intersection and interplay of the past, because meaning production is in a process of constant change. As each new text is produced, the semantic interchange between it and all previous texts creates a new interpretation of the past.

For Lachman, intertextuality, which is the interweaving of fragments from other texts or the contact between texts, forms a text's memory and contributes to the construction of meaning in literature. It also provides the potential to question "previously accepted concepts of literature" (*Memory and Literature* 29). Lachman uses the term "syncretism" to describe a particular method of intertextuality used in literary works that challenge accepted concepts. Finally, drawing on the concept of naming in the legend of Simonides, she describes the act of remembering as a second meaning, and concludes that literature is a mnemonic medium.

To conclude this section, intertextuality as world construction operates as the mnemonic link between the present and the past of a certain culture. In Lachman's words, "The mnemonic construction of the world is the way by which human beings attempt to recapture the past" ("Cultural Memory" 165). In its broadest sense, intertextual adaptation redefines the self-image of a community by means of reflective distance. Moreover, creative intertexts reduce the otherness of cultural memory by re-signifying an apparently alien sign and thus are the avenues of cultural memory.

Canon-Formation and Cultural Memory

"To abandon the canon would mean to jettison cultural memory." (Grabes 32)

The word "canon" has taken a negative sense in contemporary theory especially in the context of English studies. It is often argued that the canon is an ideological construct and must be resisted, subverted, deconstructed, and such things. Here, it should be pointed out that we are concerned with the process of canon-formation rather than whether something should be considered a canon or not. This process, in the case of *Shahnameh* (the Persian epic *Book of Kings*) is in reality a process of shaping and circulating cultural memory. The canonical status of *Beowulf* in the twentieth century through the medium of translation is the result of a similar process.

One way to understand the relationship between canon-formation and culture in general and cultural memory in particular is to employ Pierre Bourdieu's cultural sociology in order to bring to the fore the competing capitals in the semiotic field of canon-formation. According to Bourdieu, a field is a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present or potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 97)

Hence, a field consists of a hierarchically structured set of interrelated positions to be occupied by social agents or institutions. Fields are located in the social space, or social semio-sphere. The availability of positions in a field gives rise to a constant struggle between agents to gain stakes and resources, or what Bourdieu terms capital. Capital enables agents, including newcomers, to enter the field as legitimate members or to climb the ladder to more dominant and recognized positions.

Bourdieu argues that capital is what makes "the games of society" more than just a simple game of chance (241). Depending on the field in which it functions and on the means of its transformation, which is the precondition for its worth in the field in question, capital can present itself in four distinguishable forms: economic capital (refers to monetary income and other financial resources and assets, which is immediately and directly convertible into money, and which finds its institutional expression in the form of property rights), social capital (which is also transferrable in certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of title of nobility, connections, or relationship of knowledge), cultural capital (includes long-standing dispositions accrued through socialization, and can be converted, under certain conditions, into economic capital, and symbolic capital (it is a manifestation of each of the other forms of capital when they are naturalized on their own terms (242-43).

Canon-formation has a regulatory function in the culture. In times of crisis and states of transition, a culture anchors itself in a certain semiotic field known as the canon. Put differently, canon-formation is a process by which the self-image of a culture is redefined. Similar to intertextuality and translation, canonization communicates (or fails to do so) the voices of the past to the contemporary audience.

Yuri Lotman's semiotics of culture provides us with an effective framework for understanding the stabilizing role of canon-formation, and by analogy, memory-formation. For Lotman, there are at each historical moment certain accumulated reservoirs in the organization of cultural spaces, an idea similar to the notion of storage memory discussed above. In this view, canon-formation accentuates the need for "organizedness" in cultural activities.

Lotman draws a distinction between different cultural strata in terms of what is considered to be indispensable for a "self-description" of a cultural system and what pertains to it only randomly. Since any description is reductive by definition and much more rigid than the complex and fluid phenomena of any cultural practice in reality, for Lotman the "self-description" of a system means a separate, more consolidated layer. This layer is constructed within a certain cultural activity, establishing a core of representative components and norms of correctness, to the extent that they may even be formulated as rules. His example is living language: in addition to the various strata in which utterances are normally generated (standard, written, vernacular, slang, etc.), there also exists a grammar in the traditional sense of the word, namely, an official normative description of the language which in effect has very little to do with the way people speak and understand their language, yet which is viewed by both the establishment and the popular doxa as "the thing itself" and serves as both its natural example and censor (Semenenko 55).

What can be gained from Bourdieu's sociology of culture and Lotman's semiotics is the notion that canon-formation is a culturally self-descriptive process, which has the potential to turn into capital.

This is similar to Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory discussed above in which cultural memory is the mechanism comprising positive and negative definition of collective identity. To conclude, canon-formation is a media of cultural memory which is socio-politically adjusted to re-imagine the identity of community in certain historical moments. A canon is a textual community for remembering but also a field of competition for capital. Finally, when literary cultural memory is ideologically interpellated onto the subjectivity of agents, the autonomy of the field of literature is fringed upon. Authors and writers sometimes try to preserve the autonomy of the field of literature by rewriting literary cultural memory or by proposing new de-ideological interpretations of texts.

Translation and Cultural Memory

Translation Studies has undergone major changes in the twenty first century. It was once viewed as a branch of literary-linguistic study; therefore, its objects of study were mainly focused on the linguistic constraints translators faced during the translation process and the ultimate objective was to find solutions to overcome those constraints. One of the most obvious examples of evidence for this can be seen in Roman Jakobson's article, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," published in 1959. Jakobson proposed three types of translation: intralingual translation (the interpretation of a verbal sign is transferred by other signs with the same language), interlingual translation (the interpretation of a verbal sign is transferred by signs of a different language), and intersemiotic translation (the interpretation of a verbal sign is transferred by signs of nonverbal sign systems) (Jakobson²). His proposed typology has the connotation that translation is an activity prompted by the fact that different forms (i.e., in different languages) express potentially the same meanings and the objects being investigated are mainly lexical or grammatical structures.

The contemporary scene of Translation Studies has transformed the linguistic paradigm. This is often referred to as the "cultural turn" in translation studies. This transformation of the research focus became even more obvious after the advent of Even-Zohar's polysystem model and Gideon Toury's concept of translational norms in the late 1970s and early 1980s respectively. The issues raised by the polysystem model and translational norms in the context of translation led to a broadening of the perspective of Translation Studies via a consideration of its historical and cultural dimensions rather than its linguistic elements. Within this new perspective, translation was not anymore just the substitution of words or sentences in one language for those in another, but considered as emblematic of cultural context of production and reception.

Even within the cultural paradigm, the two key concepts that are frequently used include domestication and foreignization. The former refers to translative acts which appropriate the source text into the target domain, while the latter preserves the otherness of the source text (here text refers to any semiotic construction). In other words, this dialectic remains at the heart of the process of translation. To cite Schleiermacher: "either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him." (*The Translator's Invisibility* 59). The choice between the foreign and the familiar is in fact an ethical one: whether to respect the otherness of the other (in Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of Otherness) or to assimilate the other into one's own semiotic field.

Domestication in translation has sometimes been criticized. Lawrence Venuti sees domestication as dominating British and American translation culture. Just as the postcolonialists are alert to the cultural effects of the differential in power relations between colony and ex-colony, so Venuti bemoans the phenomenon of domestication since it involves "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values" (15). This entails translating a source text in a transparent, fluent, "invisible" style in order to minimize the foreignness of the target text. Domestication further covers adherence to domestic literary canons by carefully selecting the texts that are likely to lend themselves to such a translation strategy (Munday 218).

In contrast to domestication, foreignizing “entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language (242). It is the preferred choice of Schleiermacher (see above). Venuti follows this and considers foreignizing practices to be a “highly desirable [...] strategic cultural intervention” which seeks to “send the reader abroad” by making the receiving culture aware of the linguistic and cultural difference inherent in the foreign text (*The Translator’s Invisibility* 15-16). This is to be achieved by a non-fluent, estranging or heterogeneous translation style designed to make visible the presence of the translator and to highlight the foreign identity of the source text. According to Venuti, this is a way to counter the unequal and “violently” domesticating cultural values of the English-language world (Munday 218-19).

In *The Scandals of Translation*, Venuti links foreignization to “minoritizing” translation. One of the examples he gives of a minoritizing project is his own translation of works by the nineteenth-century Italian novelist Iginio Ugo Tarchetti (1839-1869) (Munday 220). The very choice of works to translate is minoritizing: Tarchetti was a minor writer, a Milanese bohemian who confronted the literary establishment by using the standard Tuscan dialect to write experimental and Gothic novels that challenged the moral and political values of the day. As far as the language is concerned, the minoritizing or foreignizing practice of Venuti’s translation comes through a deliberate inclusion of foreignizing elements such as modern American slang (Munday 219). These aim to make the translator “visible” and to make the readers realize they are reading a translation of a work from a foreign culture. In other words, while the degree of domestication/foreignization is a relative matter, for Venuti the advantage of foreignization is that it flaunts its translative partiality instead of concealing it (*The Translator’s Invisibility* 28).

The above dialectic can also be referred to as the visibility/invisibility problem. While it is axiomatic to say that in all translations there is a translator mediating the experience between the target culture reader and source culture text, the translator could profess her/his visibility or try to conceal it. Some argue that a successful translation does not call attention to itself. However, there are also those content that the ultimate goal of translation is the indivisibility of the translator, that is, the role of the translator is to “spin an illusion” (Bassnett 59). In many ways, the translator has to steer between extremes, between staying so close to the source that the new readership is alienated by unfamiliar concepts, forms or language, in short by that which is perceived to be “Other” and, at the opposite extreme, leaving the source so far behind in an attempt to satisfy the needs of that new readership that he or she may be accused of betrayal (85).

Notwithstanding the above problematic, one thing that most translation scholars agree on is the inevitability of translative loss and the impossibility of identical equivalents. As Eugene Nida, an expert in the field of translation studies, notes, “The total impact of a translation may be reasonably close to the original, but there can be no identity in detail. Something will always be lost, and the translator’s main task is to decide what can be sacrificed and what is essential to the poem’s transmission to another culture” (Bassnett 89). This means that the “task of the translator” is to negotiate two cultural spheres, that is, operate as the communicative channel between two languages-cultures.

In addition to being a medium of intercultural dialogue, translations are also part of cultural memory dynamics. The production and circulation of translation implies that a text has been recovered from the archive and brought into the canon of “working memory” (“Canon and Archive” 101). In some cases, emerging groups and individuals use the dynamics of memory articulated through new translations to construct and consolidate identity and (re-)make specific social or historical plights heard by relating these texts implicitly or otherwise to certain shared assumption of a common past (Erlil, “Travelling Memory” 9; Rigney, “Plenitude” 20).

To conclude, the fact that a text gets translated within a specific spatio-temporal intra or inter-cultural sphere is a sign of the communicative values of the text as well as the need of the intended audience to re-adjust its self-image by appropriating (affirming and denying) properties and qualities it

identifies itself with. This is especially so when the text at hand has a formative value. In this sense, translation as a process of semiosis is not only a medium of cultural memory but *is* cultural memory: cultural memory needs to be translated into the contemporary moment to preserve its significance. It involves a process of domestication and foreignization. Put differently, the relationship between cultural memory as a text to receiving culture is similar to the relationship between the source text and the target text within the problematic of domestication/foreignization in translation studies.

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