

Pseudotranslation and metafictionality

s. dir. Tom Toremans (KU Leuven) & Beatrijs Vanacker (KU Leuven)
Interférences littéraires / Littéraire interferences, n° 19, novembre 2016

Throughout literary history authors have presented their texts as translations of an imaginary original rather than as original texts of their own making. Examples of such pseudotranslations include works as diverse as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (12th cent.), Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605-1615), Montesquieu's *Les Lettres Persanes* (1721), Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1831), Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's *Hōkyōnin no Shi* (1918) and Andreï Makine's more recent *La Fille d'un héros de l'Union Soviétique* (1990). As a phenomenon that has taken on a wide variety of forms, pseudotranslation has persistently occupied a marginal position in both literary scholarship and translation studies, and still today begs more systematic study. With the exception of occasional studies (such as Anton Popovič's 1976 essay on the typology of translation), critical interest in pseudotranslation has emerged only recently, for example in the work of Susan Bassnett (1999), Emily Apter (2006), Ronald Jenn (2013), David Martens and Beatrijs Vanacker (2013), and Brigitte Rath (2014). These studies mainly present specific case studies focused on questions of originality and authenticity, the (re)invention of genres or the relation between source and target text. With this special issue, we aim to critically address the relation between pseudotranslation and metafictionality.

Theoretical and historical studies (e.g. Gideon Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995)) have mainly situated the practice of pseudotranslation in specific literary contexts. Several case studies have insisted on the emancipatory value of these texts. This emancipatory function can be seen at work in those cases in which a pseudotranslation allows a particular author to solicit recognition in a receiving culture by relying on an exogenous source (as in Andreï Makine), or in which it facilitates the introduction of aesthetic innovations in the guise of translation (as in *Papa Hamlet*), or, inversely, as it consolidates 'official' literary and editorial practices (as in totalitarian regimes). To the extent that pseudotranslations are driven by different motivations in different periods and literary contexts, they often prove symptomatic (and thus revealing) of the literary field in question and the position occupied by translation in this field. As simulacrums they provide a unique mode of representing and/or criticizing prevailing literary practices, and it is this metafictional dimension of pseudotranslations that we aim to address in this special issue.

Based in an aesthetic of imitation, pseudotranslations presuppose a critical function towards the (original or translated) literary production of a certain period. In the first place, the imposture mostly implies an extensive paratextual discourse that foregrounds the coded (and thus imitable and falsifiable) character of the prevailing translation practice and invites a critique of the presuppositions and expectations that underlie that practice and its reliability. Moreover, this paratextual discourse often takes the form of a fiction in its own right, which not only presents the history of the text's genesis and transmission, but also furnishes it with a metafictional commentary on issues of authorship, originality, genre, and the relation between fact and fiction. A final autoreferential gesture concerns the occasional explicit commentaries (in the form of

parody, satire or critique) on the practice of pseudotranslation or the intertextual references to previous pseudotranslations.

If the metafictional dimension of pseudotranslation thus primarily seems to be played out on a paratextual level, we should not lose sight of specifically diegetic processes through which these texts interrogate the practices of fiction and/or (pseudo)translation. Take, for example, the appearance of translators as characters in the story, or the presence of bilingual characters who reflect the bicultural premise of the text, or, on a more abstract level, the occurrence of different forms of imposture and play with identity. Another interesting object of analysis would be the mutual interference between pseudotranslation and other types of literary hoaxes in different periods. Finally, one could also investigate more closely the development of metafictional gestures in the different translations of pseudotranslations and determine to what extent the former comment on the 'original' pseudotranslation and if (and how) they continue gestures of mystification and imposture.

Since pseudotranslation is an essentially transcultural phenomenon that presupposes a (imaginary) cultural transfer, the editors wish to include case studies from a wide variety of cultural and historical backgrounds. We invite articles of 5000-7000 words in French, English, German or Dutch. Please send an abstract of max. 300 words and a short bio before **15 December 2015** to Beatrijs Vanacker (beatrijs.vanacker@arts.kuleuven.be) and Tom Toremans (tom.toremans@arts.kuleuven.be). Proposals will be selected before **1 January 2016** and deadline for submission of articles is **1 April 2016**. All articles will be subjected to double peer review. Publication of the special issue is scheduled for **November 2016**.

Bibliography and Further Reading

- APTER Emily. "Translation with no originals : scandals of textual reproduction." *The Translation zone : a new comparative literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006. 210-225.
- BASSNETT Susan. "When is a Translation not a Translation?" *Constructing Culture: Essays on Literary Translation*. Ed. by Susan BASSNETT and André LEFEVERE. Clevedon: Cromwell Press, 1998. 25-40.
- BEEBEE Thomas O. *Transmesis. Inside translation's black box*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- COLLOMBAT Isabelle. "Pseudo-traduction : la mise en scène de l'altérité." *Le Langage et l'homme* 38.1 (2003): 145-156.
- DE GROOTE Brecht and Tom TOREMANS. "From Alexis to Scott and De Quincey: Walladmor and the Irony of Pseudotranslation." *Essays in Romanticism* 21.2 (2014): 107-123.
- GODBOUT Patricia. "Pseudonymes, traductionnymes et pseudo-traductions." *Voix et images. Littérature québécoise* 88 (2004) (Special issue on 'Le pseudonyme au Québec', ed. by Marie-Pier LUNEAU and Pierre HÉBERT): 93-103.
- JENN Ronald. *La pseudo-traduction, de Cervantès à Mark Twain*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 2013.
- LOMBEZ Christine. "La 'traduction supposée' ou : de la place des pseudotraductions poétiques en France." *Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism*. Ed. by Dirk DELABASTITA and Rainier GRUTMAN. *LANS (Linguistica Antwerpsiensia. Themes in Translations studies)*, new series vol. 4, 2005. 107-121.
- MARTENS David. "De la mystification à la fiction. La poétique suicidaire de la fausse traduction." *Translatio in fabula, enjeux d'une rencontre entre fictions et traductions*. Ed. by Sophie KLIMIS, Isabelle OST and Stéphanie VANASTEN. Brussels: Publications des Facultés Universitaires

- Saint-Louis, 2010. 63-81. (available online at www.academia.edu/7855206/De_la_mystification_%C3%A0_la_fiction._La_po%C3%A9tique_suicidaire_de_la_fausse_traduction)
- MARTENS David. "Au miroir de la pseudo-traduction. Ironisation du traduire et traduction de l'ironie." *Traduire l'ironie*. Spec. issue of *LANS. Linguistica Antwerpsiensia. Themes in Translations studies, new series*, ed. by Pierre SCHOENTJES and Katrien LIEVOIS, 9 (2010): 195-211. (available online at <https://lans-tts.uantwerpen.be/index.php/LANS-TTS/article/view/268>)
- MARTENS David et VANACKER Beatrijs, eds. "Scénographies de la pseudo-traduction." Spec. issue of *Les Lettres Romanes* 67.3-4 (2013).
- O'SULLIVAN Carol. "Pseudotranslation." *Handbook of Translation Studies*. Ed. by Yves GAMBIER and Luc VAN DOORSLAER. Vol 2. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011. 123-125.
- POPOVIČ Anton. *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1976.
- RATH Brigitte. "Unübersetzbares, schon übersetzt. Sprachliche Relativität und Pseudoübersetzungen." *Les Intraduisibles / Unübersetzbarkeiten. Sprachen, Literaturen, Medien, Kulturen / Langues, Littératures, Médias, Cultures*. Ed. by Jörg DÜNNE, Martin Jörg SCHÄFER, Myriam SUCHET and Jessica WILKER. Paris : Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2013. 15-25.
- . "Pseudotranslation." *State of the Discipline Report ACLA*, 2014. (available online at <http://stateofthediscipline.acla.org/entry/pseudotranslation>)
- TOURY Gideon. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995.
- . "Enhancing Cultural Changes by Means of fictitious Translations." *Translation and Cultural Change*. Ed. by Eva HUNG. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2005. 3-18. (available online at <http://www.tau.ac.il/~toury/works/fict.htm>).