

## JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S THEATRE AFTER COMMUNISM: PERPETUATING THE PAST THROUGH NON- RETRANSLATION?

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the phenomenon of non-retranslation in post-Soviet Russia, and the related practice of reprinting manipulated Soviet translations today. We will illustrate this phenomenon with Jean-Paul Sartre's theatre translation in Russia. The stakes and mechanisms behind the reprinting of Sartre's Soviet translations in the post-Soviet era will be explored through the frameworks of retranslation theory. We will also reflect on the possible impact of reprinting Sartre's Soviet theatre translations today. Considering reprinting as an instance of non-retranslation, this paper will draw more attention to the practice of reprinting and how it relates to retranslation. The reasons for non-retranslation will, in part, be ascribed to the presence of a double normativity in Russia; characterized on the one hand by a dominant economic norm driving the field of literature after 1991, and on the other by a continued ideological (communist) norm. This uncovers how, a quarter of a century after its abolition, communist censorship continues to shape the reading of contemporary Russian readers, and thus puts to question the general assumption that communist censorship disappeared along with the USSR.

**Keywords:** (Non-)Retranslation; Reprint; Sartre; USSR; Russia

### O TEATRO DE JEAN-PAUL SARTRE APÓS O COMUNISMO: PERPETUAR O PASSADO PELA NÃO-RETRADUÇÃO?

**Resumo:** O presente artigo lida com o fenômeno da não-retradução na Rússia pós-URSS, e com a prática relacionada de se reimprimir hoje em



dia traduções soviéticas manipuladas. Ilustraremos este fenômeno com a tradução do teatro de Jean-Paul Sartre na Rússia. Os interesses e os mecanismos por trás da reimpressão de traduções soviéticas de Sartre na era pós-URSS serão explorados através do quadro da teoria da retradução. Também refletiremos sobre o possível impacto da reimpressão nos dias de hoje das traduções soviéticas do teatro de Sartre. Tomando a reimpressão como uma forma de não-retradução, o presente artigo prestará mais atenção à prática da reimpressão e em como se relaciona à retradução. As razões para a não-retradução serão, em parte, atribuídas à presença de uma dupla normatividade na Rússia, caracterizada, por um lado, por uma norma econômica dominante conduzindo o campo da literatura após 1991, e, por outro, por uma norma ideológica continuada (o comunismo). Isso nos mostra como, um quarto de século após sua abolição, a censura comunista continua a informar a leitura dos leitores russos contemporâneos, e assim coloca em questão o pressuposto de que a censura comunista desapareceu juntamente com a URSS.

**Palavras-chave:** (Não-)retradução; Reimpressão; Sartre; URSS; Rússia

## 1. Introduction

Jean-Paul Sartre's Russian fate in translation has been complex and changeable over time. He was first introduced to the Soviet reader as a playwright with the translation of two of his plays in 1955: *La Putain Respectueuse* and *Nekrassov* (the latter to be reprinted already in 1956). Although they both form the basis for the canonization of the Russian Sartre, the selection of these plays with their respective anti-American and pro-communist thematic, the way in which they were initially translated and then performed for about a decade, led to what Gal'tsova describes as the "total falsification" of Sartre's oeuvre (252). In 1966, *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* was first translated and in 1967, *Nekrassov* and *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* were reprinted, this time in a collection of six plays, together with a retranslation of *La Putain Respectueuse* and three new translations (*Les Mouches*, *Morts sans Sépulture*, *Les Sequestrés d'Altona*). Apart from Sartre's autobiography *Les Mots*, these seven plays were the only works by Sartre officially

accessible to the Soviet reader in Russian before the Perestroika. With the political changes induced in the 1980s and the ensuing fall of the USSR in 1991, Sartre's other work became acceptable and he was slowly introduced as a novelist and a philosopher as well.

His theatre, however, went on the back burner in the period after 1991, and this for about a decade. Possibly at that time, "Sartre as a playwright" was felt to be too closely associated with the communist past to be of interest. Indeed, the period following 1991 was characterized by the introduction of new authors, works and genres, unavailable and/or banned before. Between 1999 and 2010, however, Sartre's theatre gained in popularity again. The translations of the 1967 collection (with the addition of *Huis Clos* and *Les Mains Sales*) were reprinted at least ten times by different publishing houses, in slightly differing collections of plays.

This paper will retrace the history of Sartre's theatre in translation in Russia covering the period 1955-2010, pointing at the (dis)continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet translation and publishing practices. Indeed, if one considers the translations of Sartre's theatre available to the Russian reader today, a substantial number of them are reprints of translations made during the 1960s. According to the features of the literary field in the USSR at the time, these translations are, to a more or lesser extent, ideologically manipulated. Literature, and by extension also translation, were to conform with the dominant aesthetics of Socialist Realism and serve communist ideology, which impacted on what was translated and how this was done (Baer & Olshanskaya xi).

The practice of reprinting manipulated Soviet translations in Russia has, to our knowledge, not been researched yet. However, a similar phenomenon has been observed in other post-totalitarian regimes (Gómez Castro, Pokorn, Suleymanova). Gómez Castro has written on the subject of reprinting previously censored translations in post-Francoist Spain. Pokorn's research on the (re)translation of children's literature in Slovenia has also revealed that censored socialist translations were still being reprinted in schoolbooks after Socialism. And more recently, Suleymanova fiercely denounced

the reprinting of ideologically-adapted Soviet translations today in Azerbaijan. All three of them condemn this practice. Both Gómez Castro and Suleymanova are advocates of retranslation.

Although the Spanish, Slovenian, Azerbaijani and Russian contexts differ substantially, they also share some common ground. All four countries were in the grip of totalitarian regimes (with, however, different proclaimed ideologies: Francoism and socialism) for a shorter or longer period of time during the 20th century. In all these contexts, the production of literature and translations was ideologically constrained, amongst others by the means of (official) censorship. Today, all four countries have shifted towards more democratic political systems and their field of publishing is supposedly driven primarily by market forces. Regardless of these changes, the reprinting of previously censored translations has been observed in all four cases. It is mostly these broader contextual parallels that are of interest for the present paper.

The main aim of this paper is to present a first exploration of the phenomenon of reprinting manipulated Soviet translations in post-Soviet Russia. Through the lens of non-retranslation, we will explore the stakes and mechanisms of reprinting Sartre's Soviet translations after 1991, and inquire into the possible impact of reprinting these translations today. It is noteworthy that the reprinting of Soviet translations is not limited to Sartre's work. A random bibliographical search in the Russian National Library catalogue suggests a similar fate for authors like Hemingway, Steinbeck or Sinclair.

## **2. Translation in Russia**

The topic of this article springs from a broader research project on the Russian reception of Jean-Paul Sartre in the period 1955-2010. The multiple reprints of Soviet Sartre translations after 1991 struck us as surprising. Indeed, with the transition from

communism to capitalism after the fall of the USSR in 1991 in mind, it seemed perplexing that works that were translated during the Soviet era to serve certain ideological purposes continued to be widely circulated in the same form twenty years later. For the purpose of contextualization, in what follows, a general overview of the role and place of translation in Russia in the two periods to be discussed (Soviet and post-Soviet) is given.

It is important to keep in mind that the Soviet regime lasted for over 70 years and that the role of translation during this period inevitably fluctuated. According to Witt, literary translation in the Soviet Union could “well be the largest more or less coherent project of translation the world has seen to date – largest in terms of geographical range, number of languages involved and timespan; coherent in the sense of ideological framework (allowing for fluctuations over time) and centralized planning” (149).

From the early Soviet period onwards, translation played a prominent, but ambiguous role. Translation was sponsored by the government and served official state propaganda: it contributed to the aim of educating and spreading literacy to the masses, and forging the best-read nation in the world (Baer & Olshanskaya ix). While translation served Soviet propaganda, it also often underwent censorship, not only in the manner texts were translated, but also through what was translated. “The authorities’ anxiety about the potential for contamination and miseducation of readers manifested itself in the censorship of translation, which sought to neutralise the negative power of foreign items by minimising the impact of bourgeois ideology and Western vulgarity, bringing only what was thought to be useful and valuable to the reader” (Sherry 3). In accordance with this, the “Soviet school of translation” followed a domesticating approach to the translation of literature (Baer & Olshanskaya xi), also sometimes referred to as “free” or “realist” translation. By censorship, we refer to a broad range of practices, from state-controlled, repressive top-down control mechanisms to preventive censorship or (self-)censorship as a potentially productive act of resistance (Sherry; Pokorn 1).

In contrast to the Soviet period, translation in the post-Soviet era has not received much attention. The Perestroika, the period of political reforms induced in the mid-1980s, is often seen as a period of radical change in all spheres of society. Between 1986 and 1991, together with the shift from planned to market economy, the publishing industry was gradually privatized and “the focus shifted away from producer-led publishing to consumer-led publishing” (Abramitzky & Sin 10). In June 1990, a new Russian Press Law was introduced, forbidding censorship in the country’s media. As Shelton points out, “the disintegration of the Soviet Union left publishers with the opportunity to publish whatever they wanted [...] Due to the shortages, post-Soviet publishers had the opportunity to make huge profits by exploiting the numerous gaps in the book market” (69). At the beginning, the translation of foreign literature played a prominent role, in particular the translation of those authors and genres that had been prohibited before (Arnold 15). This boom was, however, short-lived, since Russia soon faced an economic crisis. Moreover, the market soon became saturated and Russia could now itself produce those kinds of literature it had previously had to import (Ibidem). The quick transition to a market economy and the ensuing outbreak of new publishing houses also had a negative impact on what was published, since new publishing houses were often inexperienced and did not have sufficient means (Karaïchentseva). This led to, amongst others, unedited, uncorrected publications and unsatisfactory translations of foreign literature (Ibidem).

According to Shelton, the developments in the field of literature after the fall of the USSR were not as clear-cut as is often assumed. If literature’s predominant function did become commercial, with all the above-mentioned consequences that this entails, Shelton also demonstrates how, at the same time, literature retained its political and educational roles and continued to be actively used as a basis for (societal) debate (252-255). She even states “that the only genuinely new function of literature not to be affected by the former Soviet era is that of money maker” (252). Thus,

in Shelton's view, literature in the Russian context today, to a significant extent, fulfils the same roles as it did in Soviet times.

### 3. Sartre's theatre in Russia from 1955 until 2010

As sketched in our introduction, this paper will retrace the history of Sartre's theatre in translation in Russia over the period 1955-2010, pointing at the (dis)continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet translation and publishing practices. In the table below (Table 1), an overview is provided of all publications of Sartre's theatre translations in Russia for the period under study. The list comprises all publications of Sartre's theatre (in journal and book form). However, as it is based on our own material collection in the Russian State Library, together with information from the Index Translationum catalogue, it cannot be ruled out that some publications are missing.

**Table 1.** Overview of all publications of Sartre's theatre in translation in Russia for the period 1955-2010.<sup>1</sup>

Year of publication	Title (in Russian)	Publisher	Content (original French title) of the publication <sup>1</sup>
1955	Lizzi	Inostrannaia literatura (journal)	La Putain Respectueuse (FT)
1955	Tol'ko pravda	Znamiia (journal)	Nekrassov (FT)
1956	Tol'ko pravda	Iskusstvo	Nekrassov (RPFT)
1966	Diavol' i gospod' bog	Inostrannaia literatura (journal)	Le Diable et Bon Dieu (FT)

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the publications in the table contain works other than Sartre's theatre plays, these other works are italicized.

1967	P'esy	Iskusstvo	Les Mouches (FT) Morts sans Sépulture (FT) La Putain Respectueuse (RT) Le Diable et le Bon Dieu (RPFT) Nekrassov (RPFT) Les Sequestrés d'Altona (FT) Afterword: Put' Sartra Dramaturga (by S. Velikovskii)
1989	Za zakrytymi dveriāmi	Sovremen. Dramaturgiā (journal)	Huis Clos (FT)
1991	Griāznye ruki	Ural (journal)	Les Mains Sales (FT)
1992	Stena. Izbr. Proizvedeniā	Politizdat	<i>La Nausée</i> <i>Les Mots</i> <i>Le Mur</i> Les Mouches (RPFT) Le Diable et le Bon Dieu (RPFT)
1993	Griāznye ruki	Teatr (journal)	Les Mains Sales (RT)
1999	P'esy	Gud'ial'-Press	Foreword: Put' Sartra Dramaturga (by S. Velikovskii) Les Mouches (RPFT) Morts sans Sépulture (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Le Diable et le Bon Dieu (RPFT) Huis Clos (RPFT)



			Nekrassov (RPFT) Les Sequestrés d'Altona (RPFT) Les Mains Sales (RPRT) Afterword: Put' Sartra Dramaturga (by S. Velikovskii)
2007	<i>Toshnota, Rasskazy, P'esy, Slova</i>	AST, Pushkinskaiā biblioteka	<i>La Nausée</i> <i>Le Mur</i> <i>L'Enfance d'un chef</i> <i>Les Mots</i> Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2007	<i>Slova, p'esy</i>	AST	<i>Les Mots</i> Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2007	Mukhi, Pochtitel'naiā potaskuchka, Za zakrytymi dveriāmi: P'esy	AST, Khranitel'	Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2008	Mukhi, Mėrtvye bez pogrebeniā, Pochtitel'naiā potaskushka (Lizzi Mak Keř), Diāvol i gospod bog, Zatvroniki Altony	Fliūid	Les Mouches (RPFT) Morts sans Sépulture (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Le Diable et le Bon Dieu (RT) Les Sequestrés d'Altona (RPFT)

2009	Ekzistencialnyĭ teatr: P'esy	AST	Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2009	Ekzistencialnyĭ teatr: P'esy	AST	Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2009	<i>Slova</i> , Mukhi, Pochtitel'naĭa potaskushka, Za zakrytymi dveriami.	AST	<i>Les Mots</i> Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2010	Ekzistentsialnyĭ teatr: P'esy	AST	Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)
2010	<i>Toshnota</i> ; <i>Rasskazy</i> ; P'esy; <i>Slova</i> .	AST	<i>La Nausée</i> <i>Le Mur</i> <i>L'Enfance d'un chef</i> <i>Les Mots</i> Les Mouches (RPFT) La Putain Respectueuse (RPRT) Huis Clos (RPFT)

The publications in this table involve four different kinds of texts: first translations (FT), retranslations (of first translations) (RT), reprints of first translations (RPFT) and retranslations (RPRT). “Any translation made after the first translation of a work” (our translation) will be considered to be a retranslation (Berman 1). By reprint, we mean first translations and retranslations that are published anew.

As already outlined in the introduction, Sartre’s fate in Russia has been complex. He was introduced to the Soviet readers as a playwright in the 1950s and 60s. By 1967, the lion’s share of Sartre’s

theatre was available to the Soviet readership in Russian. Two of the author's most famous plays, however, remained untranslated: *Les Mains Sales* and *Huis Clos*. Except for *Les Mots*, Sartre's autobiography, translated in 1963, his novels, philosophy and other work, remained unknown to the Soviet reader until the Perestroika.

The almost exclusive focus on his theatre, in particular on *La Putain Respectueuse* and *Nekrassov* in the early days, led to a distorted image of Sartre. Both plays were not only translated, but also frequently performed on the Soviet stage for about a decade (Gal'tsova passim). As a result, for the Soviet reader, Sartre was in the first place a playwright who took the communist struggle to heart. The other facets of his work and persona remained unknown. With the Perestroika, followed by the fall of the USSR, *Huis Clos* and *Les Mains Sales*, the two plays that were not yet available in Russian, were translated (in 1989 and 1991, respectively). In 1992, some of Sartre's plays were published in a volume containing other works as well (*Le Mur*, *La Nausée*, *Les Mots*). After that, his theatre was not published or (re)translated before 1999. In that year, the most exhaustive collection of his plays to date was published. It comprised eight of his plays (all reprints), including both *Les Mains Sales* and *Nekrassov* – two texts that have, except for this publication, remained in the shadow after the fall of the USSR. What is noteworthy about the 1999 publication, is that the book's foreword consists of the 1967 afterword by S. Velikovskii. The more than fifty-page long foreword by Velikovskii provides a thorough analysis of Sartre's work, not only discussing his plays in depth (with the inclusion of *Huis Clos* and *Les Mains Sales*, which had not yet been translated in 1967) but also their philosophical underpinning. Although in 1967 the afterword presented Soviet readers with one of the most exhaustive analyses of Sartre's theatre available at the time, it is surprising that the 1967 afterword should accompany the play collection in 1999 with no mention it was written in 1967 and no other contextualisation of any kind. That Sartre's theatre was hardly printed between 1992 and 2007 is difficult to account for. However, the lack of popularity of his

theatre after 1991 could be a consequence of the one-sided Soviet image formation of Sartre as a communist playwright in a time when the readership was longing for something new. Between 2007 and 2010, this changed quite dramatically, and Sartre's theatre was actively reprinted.

In this list of publications, retranslation seems to be a marginal phenomenon. Over a period of fifty to sixty years, three plays (out of eight in total) were retranslated at some point: 1) *La Putain Respectueuse*, first translated in 1955 and retranslated for the play collection of 1967; 2) *Les Mains Sales*, first translated in 1991 in a small journal (Ural), retranslated in 1993 in a more important journal with a wider circulation (Teatr); 3) *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*, first translated in 1966 and retranslated for a play collection in 2008. If we narrow this down to the scope of this article, namely to look into the (dis)continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet translation practices, retranslation becomes even more marginal and only one relevant retranslation is left: that of *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*. The retranslation of *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* was published by the relatively small publishing house Fliūid in 2008, in a collection of five plays. The publication was the first since 1999 to focus on Sartre's theatre only and contains plays other than the three which the larger publisher (AST) focuses on, namely *Les Mouches*, *La Putain Respectueuse* and *Huis Clos*. The fact that *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* is a retranslation is, however, not made obvious at all. After 2008, all publications of Sartre's theatre were again produced by the same larger publishing house (AST). Once again, all publications consisted of reprints of the three plays mentioned above, sometimes combined with other work (other than theatre plays) by Sartre.

The reprints discussed in this paper are considered to be unrevised. It is important to point out that reprints and revisions – i.e. “making changes to an existing TT [target text] whilst retaining the major part, including the overall structure and tone of the former version” (Vanderschelden 1) – are confusing categories. Extensive textual comparison is necessary to accurately differentiate between

both. The plays discussed in this article, however, are considered to be unrevised, based on the following: (1) the paratextual material makes no explicit mention of revision whatsoever; (2) a sample of excerpts, manipulated in the 1967 collection, was compared with the corresponding excerpts in the post-1991 reprints to see whether they had been revised or altered in any way. This appeared not to be case for any of the excerpts analyzed. Although other kinds of revision may have been carried out, this means the contemporary reader is still (at least in part) faced with ideologically manipulated texts from the 1960s. In the table below, this is illustrated with some examples of puritanical censorship (where sexual passages are attenuated or left out altogether) in the translation of *La Putain Respectueuse*. Although puritanical censorship is just one of the manners in which translations were altered, the examples below serve to illustrate the broader argumentation of this paper. The 1967 retranslation of *La Putain Respectueuse*, the 2008 reprint by the smaller publisher Fliuid and the 2009 reprint by the big conglomerate AST are compared to one another and the French version by Gallimard. In all three Russian versions, the translated passages are identical.

**Table 2.** Examples of puritanical censorship in the 1967 translation of *La Putain Respectueuse* and its later reprints.

Sartre (2005)	Sartr (1967 Iskusstvo; 2008 Fliuid; 2009 AST)
Bon, bon. ( <i>Un temps.</i> ) Je peux te poser une question? ( <i>Il ne répond pas.</i> ) Si l'amour te dégoûte, qu'est ce que tu es venu faire chez moi? ( <i>Il ne répond pas. Elle soupire.</i> ) (2005: 215)	Khorosho, khorosho! ( <i>Pauza.</i> ) Mozhno zadat' tebe vopros? (1967: 158; 2008: 221, 2009: 126)
Well, well. ( <i>Pause.</i> ) Can I ask you a question? ( <i>He does not</i>	Well, well. ( <i>Pause.</i> ) Can I ask you a question?

*answer.*) If love disgusts you,  
what are you doing at my place?  
(*He does not answer. She sighs.*)

**Si tu es monté pour me  
proposer ta combine, tu n'avais  
pas besoin de coucher avec moi.  
Hein? Pourquoi as-tu couché  
avec moi, salaud? Pourquoi as-  
tu couché avec moi?** (2005: 218)

I esli ty podniālsīā siūda chtoby  
obdelyvat' svoi delishki, zachem  
ostalsīā so mnoī do utra? A  
zachem provel so mnoī noch'?  
Zachem? (1967: 162; 2008: 227;  
2009: 132)

If you came up here to involve me  
in your scheme, you did not need  
to sleep with me. Right? Why did  
you sleep with me, you bastard?  
Why did you sleep with me?

If you came up here in order to  
get your business done, why did  
you stay with me until morning?  
Why did you spend the night with  
me? Why?

Je l'ai regardé et j'ai pensé: j'ai  
envie d'elle. (2005: 233)  
I looked at him and thought: I  
want her.

Ja gliādel na nego i vdrug  
podumal: khochu k neī. (1967:  
179; 2008: 252; 2009: 157)  
I looked at him and suddenly  
thought: I want to go to her.

... j'ai ton odeur dans mes  
narines. (2005: 233)

... vdykhaiū zapach tvoikh volos...  
(1967: 180; 2008: 252; 2009: 157)

... I have your odor in my nose.

... I smell the odor of your hair.

235: C'est vrai que je t'ai donné  
du plaisir? Réponds. C'est vrai?  
(2005: 235)

Tak eto pravda, chto tebe  
khorosho so mnoī? Otvechaī.  
Pravda? (1967; 181; 2008: 256;  
2009: 160)

So, it's true that I gave you  
pleasure? Answer. Is it true?

So, it's true that you like being  
with me? Answer. Is it true?

As mentioned above, the paratextual material does not explicitly mention revision. At times, however, this becomes ambiguous. Although all post-1991 reprints mention the different plays' translators, it remains unclear when the translations were produced and/or first published, and/if/or revised. Either the year of (the

first) (publication of the) translation is not mentioned at all, or a year is mentioned, but it remains unclear what this year mention means. The year is then mentioned together with the translator's name(s), and often, but not always, corresponds to the year of publication of the reprint or of an earlier reprint (or, in one case, supposedly of the retranslation). It never corresponds to the publication year of the original translations. In fact, there is no reference to these anywhere. This leads to confusion and fosters the illusion that a translation is either new (i.e. dating from the same year as the reprint) or that it was revised for the reprint. It is, therefore, unclear when old translations are being reprinted, when translations have been revised (and what revision then entails), or when new translations appear. Only an informed reader will notice, by paying close attention to translators' names or comparing texts, whether a translation is a reprint or a new translation. One example is the copyright notice in the 2008 publication by Fliūid.

Table 3. Copyright notice, Sartr (2008). Left the copyright notice as in the Russian publication, right the transliteration.

© Editions Gallimard, 1962 © Л. Большинцова, Л. Зонина, Е. Пучкова, Е. Якушкина, перевод, 2008. © ООО «ИД «Флиюд», 2008	© Editions Gallimard, 1962 © L. Bol'shintsova, L. Zonina, E. Puchkova, E. Iakushkina, perevod, 2008 © ООО "ID "Fliūid", 2008
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In the copyright notice above, the year 2008 is mentioned together with the names of the translators. Therefrom, it could be inferred that these translations were either produced or revised in 2008. However, only Puchkova's translation of *Le diable et le bon Dieu* is a new translation. The other reprints, as the example in Table 2 illustrates, seem unrevised. At least to the extent that previously manipulated passages are kept. What the mention of 2008 really signifies then, is unclear. Even more so in the cases where translators have already passed away (e.g., Bol'shintsova,

the translator of *La Putain Respectueuse*). The fact that the paratextual material does not even allow to differentiate between the reprints and the retranslation in the collection, also testifies to its intransparency.

#### 4. Retranslation reexplored

Retranslation research has, not surprisingly, mainly focused on actual retranslation. At the same time, the phenomenon of reprinting, although being mentioned and accounted for sporadically in different fields, has attracted little attention. We believe, and will illustrate and argue further, that the choice to reprint, in the case at hand, can - to some extent - be seen as a choice not to retranslate. When the categories that lie between translation and retranslation (here reprints, but also for example revisions) are left out, a gap is assumed between both practices. Considering the act of reprinting (or not reprinting), however, questions this idea of a gap between translating and retranslating. Indeed, reprinting, as retranslating, presupposes an active choice. It means a work is being kept in motion and available for readers. Although both reprinting and retranslating cause a similar movement, they are different in the message they convey. Retranslating is bringing something new, reprinting is keeping something old. Considering then why some texts are not retranslated but rather reprinted (or not reprinted) seems relevant to retranslation theory, too.

Paloposki and Koskinen already discussed reprinting in relation to retranslation after stumbling on a high number of reprints in their search for retranslations in the Finnish context (“Reprocessing”). Reprints, they observe, “can be interpreted, not negatively as a lack of the will to retranslate, but positively as a desire to keep a stock of works available for the readers” (“Reprocessing” 34). Since retranslating everything would be too costly, choices need to be made, and at times these seem random (“Reprocessing” 34). They also point out that the choice to retranslate or to reprint



is sometimes related to the profile of publishers: established publishers tend to reprint, young ones to innovate and retranslate (“Reprocessing” 35). Although Paloposki and Koskinen do not entirely leave reprints aside, they are secondary in their analysis and the reasons for reprinting remain somewhat on the surface (“Reprocessing”). This paper sets out to elaborate upon possible reasons for reprinting (as opposed to retranslating) by approaching reprints of Sartre’s theatre in post-Soviet Russia through the lens of (non-)retranslation.

In the following, a number of approaches to retranslation will be discussed and drawn upon to elaborate on this case; textual, normative and social approaches will be presented. This paper does not set out to provide a comprehensive review on retranslation. For this, we would refer to Brownlie (“Narrative”), Deane-Cox or Alvstad.

#### **4.1. Textual approaches and the retranslation hypothesis**

One approach to retranslation has focused on the textual features of translations to account for their retranslation. Berman, one of the first scholars after Goethe to elaborate on the phenomenon of retranslation, viewed retranslation as following a model of linear progress always resulting from the inadequacy or “unaccomplishedness” of a previous translation. In the line of Goethe’s early theorizing on retranslation, Berman suggested that a retranslation would always come closer to (the essence of) the original text. In his eyes, an accomplished translation – in its most achieved form a “great translation” – could only be produced after going through several stages of translation. Drawing on Berman, Chesterman formulated the Retranslation Hypothesis (RH) that argues that first translations are target-oriented, whereas retranslations are source-oriented (8). Berman and the RH have been repeatedly criticized since. One of the most frequent criticisms has been that the hypothesis still needed testing, something Chesterman himself had formulated already (*Ibidem*). Numerous scholars have since undertaken to test the hypothesis, with various outcomes.

Paloposki and Koskinen, in testing the hypothesis, reached the conclusion that domestication, although in certain cases appearing to be a feature of first translations, would rather be a reflection of the phase in which a certain literature found itself, than a characteristic of first translations in general (“A thousand” 29). The Sartre translations accomplished before the Perestroika are, to some extent, target-oriented (cfr. table 2 or Gal’tsova on the manipulated translations of *La Putain Respectueuse* and *Nekrassov*). Although this does not confirm that all first translations are target-oriented, ostensibly, it does suggest that the RH’s claim that first translations are, holds in this particular case. Domestication, however, was one of the main characteristics of the Soviet translation school (Baer & Olshanskaya xi). The domesticating first translations of Sartre’s theatre then, rather than resulting from their being first translations, most likely reflect the phase in which Russian literature found itself at the time.

According to Berman, domestication produced deficient translations, creating the need for new translations. He asserted that retranslation was called for due to shortcomings on a textual level (4-6). In theory, this implies that Sartre’s Soviet translations would call for retranslation. Paloposki and Koskinen, in questioning the RH, suggest that to test the existing assumption “that *domesticating* first translations date, creating a need for foreignizing retranslations (...) one would actually have to look at cases of non-retranslation as well” (“A thousand” 28). The non-retranslation of Sartre’s theatre in the post-Soviet era seems to suggest that the need for new, foreignizing translations is, however, not felt. On this point too, the RH is rejected.

#### **4.2. Retranslation as challenge**

Another approach to retranslation is Venuti’s conception of translation as challenge. To a certain extent, this vision also adheres to the idea of history as progress. However, progress in this case, is conceived of as a discursive tool, and not as an intrinsic property of the object itself. According to Venuti, retranslations “justify

themselves by establishing their differences from one or more previous versions” (96). They compete with these versions, often by stating their superiority. The idea of progress is discursive in the sense that to state that a translation is better or superior, does not signify it is indeed objectively superior.

The need to challenge old translations does not seem to apply to Sartre's translations (cfr. table 1). The continuous reprinting of old translations suggests quite the opposite. The position of a particular translation is reinforced by conferring it legitimacy, even canonicity, through the repeated act of reprinting. Brownlie confers a similar power to retranslation, by stating that retranslations “serve to keep the memory of [a] source text alive, contributing to its canonization in cultural memory” (*Mapping* 78). The difference, however, is that reprints, although technically also keeping the memory of the source text alive, rather reinforce a very specific interpretation of it.

The one retranslation that was published in 2008 does in no obvious way challenge the previous translation. It is difficult to answer the question as to why this new translation would not, in fact, visibly wish to challenge the previous one. However, as Suleymanova observes, Soviet translations tend to possess a certain status (87). The assumed quality of Soviet translations in general, in conjunction with their repeated reprinting and resulting integration into literary memory, makes them hard to contest: “the challenge of retranslating the fiction works “stereotyped” by the readers as an absolute equivalent of the original can be justified by the fear of deviation from the existing “recognized translations” (Suleymanova 87).

### **4.3. Normative and ideological approaches**

Retranslation has also attracted norms/ideology approaches, of which a useful example for this case-study is Brownlie's (“Narrative”). These approaches see retranslations as a reflection of developments in the ideology and/or norms of the target culture. Their study could “reveal changing norms and ideologies in society”

(“Narrative” 150). Although normative approaches are powerful, Brownlie also observes that they “tend to neglect complexities” by focusing on broad social patterns (“Narrative” 155). To avoid falling into the pitfalls of generalization which normative and social approaches could lead to, Brownlie conceives of the possibility of heterogeneous norms, following from retranslation taking place on a “rhizomatic space” (Brownlie in Deane-Cox 11). She looks not only at the broad social, but also the specific contextual circumstances, and how individual and structural circumstances are entangled. For example, Brownlie points out that the “tendency to consider that there are different time periods, each with a different set of norms/ideologies, which explains the changing characteristics of translations” is an oversimplification (“Narrative” 156). She adds that retranslations as well as occurring in different time periods and reflecting changing norms/ideology, could occur during one and the same time period (Ibidem).

This reflection is quite useful, as it also works the other way around and could, hence, explain non-retranslation occurring in a period when it could be expected. A traditional normative approach would suggest, based on our material, that norms have not changed. Brownlie’s suggestion that the relationship between time period and norms/ideology can be blurred or that different norms can coexist (“Narrative” 156), seems particularly relevant to the post-Soviet context. The assumption that the post-Soviet era equals post-Soviet norms is somewhat premature. The general norms and ideology driving society, more particularly the literary field, have changed since 1991. With the transition to capitalism, the previously absent economic norm has come to play a central role (Shelton 252). Communism is no longer the official state ideology, and the choices of publishers are no longer constrained by it in the same ways as before. However, what the collected data also suggest, is that this old ideological norm still partially seems to be of influence. This implies that a double normativity exists, where choices publishers make are informed by economic incentives, but also ongoingly by the old ideological norm. Moreover, the present case demonstrates

how the past ideological norm continues to affect the content of literature, and thus not only the structures of the field of publishing or the role of literature in general (cfr. Shelton 252-253).

#### **4.4. Reprinting as economic capital**

One argument that is often advanced to account for the choice to reprint, also in the post-censorship cases similar to this one, is the economic one. The practice of reprinting allows to easily draw upon the existing symbolic capital of translations to create economic capital (cfr. Sapiro). Gómez Castro (184) and Pokorn (157) both point out that publishers have, in fact, replaced their previously ideological drive by an economic one. This is also what Shelton observes (253).

If we conceive of the field as a space of struggle for positions as informed by Bourdieu, usually big publishers are more focused on economic value and thus tend to reprint, whereas smaller publishers are more focused on literary value, challenging the prevailing norms, and, consequently, keener on retranslating (Sapiro *passim*; Paloposki and Koskinen “A thousand” 34-35). What we see in this case, to some degree, fits this scenario: the big conglomerate (AST) focuses on reprints (of only three specific plays); moreover, it publishes plays, novels, etc. combined. The two more extensive play collections (with plays only), one of which containing a retranslation, were published by smaller publishing houses (Gud’iāl-Press and Fliūid). Although the differences are not so significant, this does show that the stakes and intents of the publishers could differ. One of the questions we could ask is whether a smaller publishing house can benefit from retranslating texts that have been reprinted so often that they have developed a certain status. In this light, rendering a retranslation invisible (cfr. the 2008 RT) could, in fact, be a way to carefully challenge an earlier more established translation. This merely by the fact of introducing an alternative voice.

The argument that the incentive to reprint instead of retranslate would only be economic is, however, hard to argue for in this

case. Firstly, the high frequency of the reprinting (almost yearly, sometimes twice a year) raises questions as to the economic capital the reprints can generate, even if the reprinting does contribute to the symbolic consecration of the existing translations. Secondly, questioning the purely economic imperative also follows from what is selected to be reprinted. For example, the consistent inclusion of *La Putain Respectueuse*, versus the exclusion of *Les Mains Sales*, seems to be driven by an ideological imperative of some kind. This suggests that, although the attitudes towards Sartre shifted after the fall of the USSR, there is also a continuity in the choices made to shape his mediation. On the one hand, there is a dominant economic norm driving all publishers to reprint old Soviet translations in their pursuit of profit (here an ideological norm is sustained, but it does not seem to drive choices). On the other hand, however, there also seems to be an ideological norm actively informing the choices made by publishers when selecting certain plays for reprint over others. The latter is most likely also related to the economic component. If the publishers' "ideological choice" follows from the assumption that the famous Soviet translations (as *La Putain Respectueuse*) will generate more profit than more anti-communist works (as *Les Mains Sales*), the economic choice is still consciously informed by underlying ideological considerations. It is interesting to point out that the structures of capitalism, although in theory opposed to those of communism, seem to support the further propagation of communist beliefs. The above also corresponds to the idea of double normativity formulated earlier. This double normativity seems to vary in accordance with a publisher's position in the field: in the larger publishers, it seems stronger, in small publishers the ideological norm seems more contested. However, this last observation is relative and tends towards oversimplification. For example, although the 1999 publication by the smaller publisher Gud'ial-Press includes more plays than any other collection in the period under study, it is as opaque as all other publications when it comes to the information it provides on the translations it contains

(translators are mentioned but no years of translation or earlier publication are mentioned at all). The collection also contains a foreword by Velikovskii, which in fact corresponds the 1967 afterword in *P'esy*. However, this is not mentioned, and based on the information in the book, the reader cannot infer that this foreword was not written for the 1999 publication but accompanied an earlier (Soviet) publication of Sartre's plays. There is also no other form of (historical) contextualisation. Regardless of the value of Velikovskii's text, the absence of contextualisation, in addition to the absence of information on the presented translations, in a way suggests that even if this publisher contests the ideological norm in its choice of texts, it simultaneously sustains it.

#### **4.5. Impact on the reader**

This last observation deals with the impact that the practice of reprinting could have on the Russian readership today. As Pokorn and Gómez Castro observe, these practices raise ethical questions, as readers are being manipulated unwittingly. According to Pokorn, one of the reasons for reprinting, together with the economic one, is that not only readers, but also publishers are unaware that these old translations were manipulated (155-156). For the Russian context, this seems unlikely. There is an extensive body of research on Soviet censorship that cannot be ignored. Moreover, this research has shown that both Soviet readers and editors were very much aware of the existence of censorship (Sherry, Dobrenko), and as Shelton points out, many current editors used to work in the field before 1991 (70). That their awareness would have vanished with the fall of the USSR seems unlikely. The Russian publishers' choice to reprint potentially manipulated Soviet translations must then be at least partially a conscious one.

On the contrary, the awareness of contemporary readers (especially the younger generation) that what they are reading is ideologically manipulated is much less self-evident. The reprints do not clearly mention they are reprints, the years of translation

(or first publication of translations) are either omitted, or when a year is mentioned, it is unclear what it refers to. Moreover, unlike Soviet readers, the readers today, young or old, have no reason to suspect that they are reading a translation that was manipulated for ideological purposes in Soviet times. In Pokorn's words: "the 'spectre of communism' is still haunting us in numerous translations that are uncritically reprinted" (Pokorn 4).

## 5. Conclusions

In this article, we presented the history of Sartre's theatre translation in Russia, drawing particular attention to its non-retranslation in post-Soviet Russia, and the related practice of reprinting ideologically manipulated Soviet translations today. This study, building further on the small body of literature tackling a similar phenomenon in post-authoritarian regimes, is of broader relevance than Sartre's case alone. Yet more research will be needed to confirm this and to further investigate the reasons behind this phenomenon. To date, the reprinting of old translations in Russia has remained somehow invisible, both in the publications themselves and in the body of research on translation in Russia.

In addition to this, the present case has shown the potential relevance of looking into instances of non-retranslation, such as reprinting, to further elaborate upon retranslation theory. Indeed, Sartre's Russian fate is a good illustration of the value of looking into what lies between translation and retranslation. Although the exact reasons for reprinting manipulated translations in Russia are diverse and difficult to pinpoint, its practical implications are not to be disregarded.

The continued reprinting of Soviet translations, in which manipulated passages remain unrevised, is not without consequences for Russian readers today. In Sartre's case, it impacts his contemporary reception through the continued circulation of a manipulated Soviet interpretation of his work and persona. More generally, this practice continues the somewhat indiscernible spreading of Soviet ideology



and its influences in contemporary society. Readers are most likely unaware that the texts they read were previously manipulated, as (1) there is no reason for them to suspect what they read was ideologically manipulated for a different audience in a different era; (2) it is a rather complex undertaking for the reader to find out when the different translations in reprint were actually produced.

Gómez Castro's claim that "the situation is crying out for some kind of action so that these texts may be consigned to history" (193), seems too radical to us. What appears essential, however, is to come to a better understanding of the reasons underpinning this practice of reprinting. Moreover, awareness ought to be raised so that this is no longer an indiscernible phenomenon. And with awareness, change might come. Change could manifest itself in various ways, e.g. retranslation, revision or even the act of not reprinting. As a first step towards any kind of change, a more explicit and transparent paratext should be argued for, in the first place making it possible for the reader to know what kind of text he or she is dealing with.

It could be that the time is not ripe yet. After all, it has only been 26 years since the USSR collapsed. The transition towards a new body of post-Soviet translations cannot happen overnight and it is normal that in this process, some authors are prioritized over others. Maybe, however, it is not a matter of time, and Russia will stick to its Soviet translations for a lot longer. In either case, further research will be needed to map how widespread this phenomenon actually is, which authors and genres are being reprinted, and which are being retranslated. This will also lead to a better understanding of the practice of (re)translation in contemporary Russia. To collaborate with publishers in this process would be fruitful. Also, readers' input would be valuable in order to better understand how they relate to these reprints. On a more general level, it could be interesting to connect the practice of reprinting previously manipulated texts in post-Socialist countries (and beyond), so as to map and investigate the long-lasting effects of institutionalized censorship.

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