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FOREIGNIZING TRANSLATION STRATEGIES: CULTURAL REALIA IN RETRANSLATIONS OF M. BULGAKOV'S *THE MASTER AND MARGARITA*

The current analysis focuses on foreignised translation strategies used when rendering *Sovietisms* in six English translations of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* (1940, 1966/1967) by Ginsburg (1967), Glenny (1967), Burgin and O'Connor (1995), Pevear and Volokhonsky (1997), Karpelson (2006) and Aplin (2008). The term *Sovietisms* refers to lexical items characteristic of Soviet discourse in the 1930s. The purpose of this article is also test the assumption of the Retranslation Hypothesis that the first translations are more domesticated and target-oriented than the subsequent ones.

В данной статье рассматриваются стратегии форенизации, использованные для переводов советизмов в шести английских переводах романа Михаила Булгакова "Мастер и Маргарита" (1940, 1966/1967). Роман перевели Гинзбург (1967), Гленни (1967), Бурджин и О'Коннор (1995), Пивеар и Волохонская (1997), Карпелсон (2006) и Аплин (2008). Термин "советизм" относится к лексическим словообразованиям характерным для советского дискурса 1930-х годов. Целью данной статьи является так же тестирование гипотезы повторного перевода, которая предполагает, что первые переводы всегда более адаптированы и ориентированы на читателя, чем последующие.

**Keywords:** *translation, Bulgakov, Soviet, discourse, culture, strategies*

## 1. Introduction

The article focuses on retranslations as a response to the need to update translated texts and Berman's claim that first translations are usually target-oriented, whereas retranslations are generally closer to the source text (1984: 198). In order to test the validity of this hypothesis of later translations approaching the original more closely, six English translations of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* were selected, which offer a unique opportunity for scholars to follow translating tendencies over time. This comparative analysis focuses on foreignizing strategies used in the first and subsequent translations of Bulgakov's novel in terms of closeness to, or divergence from, the original.

The history of English translations of *The Master and Margarita* is inseparable from the turbulent history of the novel's publication in the Soviet Union. Written in the darkest period of Stalin's rule, Bulgakov's „sunset novel” remained unpublished for more than twenty years after the author's death in 1940. When it was finally released in 1966-67<sup>1</sup> in the Soviet Union as a heavily censored version of the original text, two strikingly different English translations followed. The difference is explained by the fact that the translators worked with two different Russian editions. The first translation for Grove Press in 1967 was prepared by Mirra Ginsburg, who was given access to only the censored text published in the Soviet Union in 1967. Michael Glenny, whose translation was also released in 1967, used a more complete source version that the London publishing house Harper and Row received after discussion with the Soviets. In 1995, American translators Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor retranslated Bulgakov's novel, which was then published by Vintage books and, in 1997, Penguin classics published a trans-

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<sup>1</sup> The novel was published in two issues of *Literaturnaya gazeta*.

lation made by the famous best-selling, award-winning couple Richard Pevear and Larisa Volokhonsky. The subsequent reprints followed in 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2007. In 2006 Michael Karpelson's translation was issued by Lulu Press and in 2008, the most contemporary translation, by Hugh Aplin, was published by Oneworld classics.

To test the main assumptions of the Retranslation Hypothesis, the analysis focuses on one of the most distinctive features of Bulgakov's style, namely, his *Sovietisms*, brought into the Russian language by the discourse of revolution and the communist regime. The term refers to a vocabulary that describes various aspects of Soviet life (e.g. professions, institutions, propagandistic slogans, etc.). As distinctive verbal signs of the Soviet times, *Sovietisms* have important functions in Bulgakov's narrative, illustrating how the literary Russian language was manipulated by the authorities, how it became trapped in revolutionary terminology, and how it was reduced to a propagandistic discourse that expressed, above all, fear and paranoia.

According to Kučiš (2014: 201) „translators are both communicators and creators of new information in a specific cultural environment.” As with any other type of culturally-specific terms, *Sovietisms* carry important, though implicit, information; hence, extensive domestication of these national, cultural and social components would significantly change the interpretive coordinates. In my study, I draw attention to foreignization strategies used by the translators when rendering *Sovietisms* and discuss what these choices entail for the general reader's perception of the narrative.

The analysis is carried out with the methodologies developed by Sergei Vlahov and Sider Florin, as well as Eirlys E. Davies, for analysis of translation shifts in the context of foreignizing tendencies. Each translation choice is evaluated by the parameters of denotative and connotative meanings, as well as assuming a target audience of English-speaking readers who are unfamiliar with most of the terms in question. For the sake of diversity and to illustrate the influence of *Sovietisms* in different dimensions

of soviet linguistic reality, I chose examples that refer to various cultural fields, above all to material culture and political and administrative concepts.

## 2. Methodology: definition and translation of Sovietisms

Since translations of *Sovietisms* were chosen to demonstrate whether later translations follow the source text more closely than earlier ones, it is necessary to define the term. The term has been defined in a variety of ways. I use the seminal work (in Russian) by Vlahov and Florin (1980/2008) on translating *realia*, in which there is a chapter entirely devoted to *Sovietisms* and ways of translating them. The authors see *Sovietisms* as a sub-category of *realia*, i.e., as

*words or word-formations that name subjects, facts and objects characteristic of life, a mode of life, the culture or the social development of a nation, which express a national and/or a historical semantic colouring („kolorit”) that is unclear, or completely unknown, to another* (Vlahov and Florin 1980: 47; my translation).

They also state that, unlike other types of *realia*, *Sovietisms*, apart from the connotative meaning and the national semantic colouring of common *realia*, also have their own, social colouring, which is exclusively specific for the Soviet regime (Vlahov and Florin 1980: 148).

They divide *Sovietisms* into three categories: (1) *Sovietisms-realia* characteristic of the Soviet Union (e.g. *sovkhoz*, *neotlozhka*, *tselinnik*, *stakhanovets*), which should always be translated in some way considering the absence of equivalents in the target readers' culture; (2) *regional Sovietisms*, which sometimes, but not often differ from national terms in any socialist country, and thus should be treated similarly and (3) *international Sovietisms* (e.g. *soviet*, *sputnik*, *bolshevik*), which are so well-known that they do not require explanations in a translation (1980: 144-145). The analysis focuses on the translations of category (1).

While I accept Vlahov and Florin's categorization of *Sovietisms*, I turn to Davies for a classification of foreignizing transla-

tion strategies: preservation (transliteration or calquing), addition (inside and outside the text) and literal translation and domesticating translation strategy: globalisation, localisation, transformation, and creation (Davies 2003: 72-89)<sup>2</sup>. Omission is also suggested as a possible strategy.

### 3. Re-translation Hypothesis

The Retranslation Hypothesis, introduced and formulated by Bensimon (1990), Berman (1990) and Gambier (1994), focuses on literary retranslation as an attempt at improving on previous translations. Improvement is measured by the criterion of increased „otherness.” According to them, initial translations tend to reduce the ‘otherness’ of the source text, whereas a retranslation is more successful in conveying the foreignness of the original without becoming obscure; the target audience has become acquainted with the foreign text and its culture through the ‘introduction-translation’, and is therefore subsequently more receptive to a foreignizing text. Berman claims that early translation is an “incomplete” act that only can evolve and become more complete through later translation. “Completion” for Berman means: a translation getting ever closer to the source text. All translations are marked with some inherent „failure” that is at its peak in the first translation (1990: 5), whereas subsequent translations (provided the translator has the required skills) render the source text more closely, by emphasizing the otherness of the original (1990: 6-7). Still, there is always room for retranslations.

Bensimon (1990: ix) speaks of first translations as the “naturalization of the foreign works” that serves to introduce them into a given target culture. Hence, first translations aim at ensuring a positive reception of the work in the target culture by not making the reading process too challenging. Subsequent translations pay more attention to the style of the source text and maintain a cultural distance to the target culture in the translation (1990).

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<sup>2</sup> These strategies apply to all kinds of *realia*, not only *Sovietisms*.

The Retranslation Hypothesis is formulated in more specific terms by Gambier (1994: 414), who states that

*first translation always tends to be more assimilating, tends to reduce the otherness in the name of cultural and editorial requirements [...] Later translations “mark a return to the source text” (emphasis in the text). First translations, therefore, are assumed to feature cuts<sup>3</sup> and to avoid cultural challenges because of concerns for higher levels of readability than “[t]he subsequent translations which by contrast, pay more attention to the letter and style of the source text and maintain a cultural distance between the translation and its source, reflecting the singularity of the latter (Gambier 1994: ix-x).*

The Retranslation Hypothesis does not represent the only tendency in contemporary research on the topic. There is also a focus on target culture translations and retranslation as repudiation of a previous translation (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003) and prevailing translation norms (Gideon 1995, Chesterman 1997), as well as active vs. passive retranslations<sup>4</sup> (Pym 1998), to mention only a few different perspectives. This comparative textual analysis tests the main assumptions of the Retranslation Hypothesis, i.e. the notion that later translations tend to keep a greater cultural distance to the target culture than first ones. Its aim is to test the validity of the hypothesis, admittedly relying on just one parameter: lexical *Sovietisms*.

The Retranslation Hypothesis implies the paradigm of idealism, i.e., the notion that the more we retranslate the “better” the translations become. The criteria for what constitutes a ‘good’ translation remain elusive, however, beyond the “foreignizing” criterion. It is not the aim in this article to evaluate different trans-

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<sup>3</sup> As we know from translations of works rejected for publication in the Soviet Union and later published with excisions, cuts may be censorship-linked and, if the censored version is the only one available to the translator (as in the case of Ginsburg), omissions clearly are not to be blamed on the translator.

<sup>4</sup> A passive retranslation is one where the translator may, or may not, be aware of a previously published one; if the translator was aware of a pre-existing translation, s/he does not attempt to compete with it. An active re-translation is by a translator who is aware of the existence of a previously published translation and actively competes against it (Pym 1988: 82)

lations, but rather to investigate whether the initial English translations of Bulgakov's novel are domesticated to a greater extent, and are target-closer, than subsequent translations.

#### 4. Transliteration and Calquing

Translating by calques occurs consistently in all six translations in the cases of two compounds – “Госбанк” (Bulgakov 1988: 452), a *state bank*, is rendered by all translators as “a state bank” (Ginsburg: 230; Glenny: 209; Burgin and O'Connor: 176; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 2009; Karpelson: 166; and Aplin: 211) and “Интурист”, (Bulgakov 1988: 389) a *foreign tourist*, as a “foreign tourist” (Ginsburg: 13; Glenny: 16; Burgin and O'Connor: 10; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 15; Karpelson: 9; and Aplin: 13). Though both examples allow for relatively “unproblematic” calquing that is, to a large extent, familiar to readers, the connotative meaning of compounds as important lexical characteristics of the Soviet discourse is lost.

Other compounds are translated using different calques, such as “Жилплощадь” (Bulgakov 1988: 468), a *living space*, mentioned in the ninth chapter. Considering the permanent shortage of living space in the Soviet Union, acquiring a “жилплощадь” was one of the people's main concerns. Glenny (112) and Burgin and O'Connor (72) opted for a “housing space”, while Pevear and Volokhonsky (95), Karpelson (73) and Aplin (94) translated the term as “living space”. There is little difference between “housing space” and “living space,” as both versions transfer the denotative meaning well. Ginsburg is the only translator who, rather than a calque, used the explanatory adaptation “dead man's rooms” (102), which is also acceptable, since it is clear from the context that Bulgakov is referring to the recently-deceased Professor Berlioz, who died at Patriarch's Ponds. Preservation by transliteration would probably cause difficulties for a Western reader.

Similar tendencies of translating using various calques may also be noticed in the translation of the compound “Домоуправление” (Bulgakov 1988: 527), a *house committee*,

who were entrusted with enormous power and were responsible for the administration of anything to do with general issues affecting the building. Ginsburg (180), Glenny (112) and Pevear and Volokhonsky (160) opted for “house management”, while Burgin and O’Connor used “house committee.” (78) In my opinion, calquing with the word “management” transfers the meaning accurately, evoking associations with property management, though this contemporary term is probably not the best option for transferring a distant Soviet discourse. “House committee” sounds more authentic. Karpelson adaptation “tenant board” (124) is culturally specific; coming from Canada, the translator probably had in mind the Landlord and Tenant Board (formerly the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal). If this is the case, the question arises whether English-speaking readers from other countries would have the same immediate associations or whether the term may seem odd and out of place. Aplin’s extended semi-calquing “House Management Committee” (121) is transparent and allows for easy interpretation.

It is interesting that only Aplin opted for calquing in the following example. The term “квартирный вопрос,” (Bulgakov 1988: 494) *apartment question* is used by Woland, who gives a performance of black magic in one of Moscow’s theatres and, while his assistants perform tricks, he observes the audience and comes to the conclusion that Moscovites have not changed much. They are still greedy and immoral, though sometimes sensitive, but in Woland’s opinion an “apartment question” has only spoiled them. This refers to a distinctive phenomenon of the early Soviet epoch, namely, a communal flat shared by several families who used the same kitchen and toilet facilities. The Soviet politics of packing people together in a communal flat and destroying a private space, was also a system designed to force people to spy upon one another. Thus, the loss of a private space did not mean merely the inconveniences of sharing a kitchen or a bathroom, but had a much deeper impact on people’s morale. Aplin is the only translator who opted for a preservation of the content by calquing “the housing question” (127). As is often the case with calquing, Aplin’s



version sounds unusual in English but illustrates the meaning well. Burgin and O'Connor's (104) and Glenny's (107) suggestion of a transformative "housing shortage" signifies that the author means a lack of home facilities more clearly than a „housing problem," used by Pevear and Volokhonsky (138) and Karpelson (126). The term is deleted in Ginsburg's translations as she translated from a censored version published in the Soviet Union.

The problem with transliteration is that readers often fail to access the source culture meaning of the term, thus bringing them further instead of closer to the source, especially if not combined with additions. Transliteration in the examples below is justified, as the Anglophone reader should not face any major difficulties involved in interpreting the terms.

Transliteration occurred in all six translations when translating the syllable contraction *Dramlit*, (Bulgakov 1988: 600); it is the name of the elitist House of Writers to which only the party-faithful had access. Margarita, who, by this time, has already been turned into a witch, causes a flood in this building, taking revenge on the critic Latunsky who launched a denunciation campaign attacking her beloved Master's novel. When flying over the streets of Moscow, Margarita notices the compound word displayed on the building and wonders what it means. Bulgakov is being ironic. Soviet neologisms were so numerous and complex that Margarita, who has lived in the Soviet environment all her life and heard Soviet speech every day, nevertheless could not keep up with all of them, and she is baffled by a relatively decipherable one, perhaps because she does not expect to see a literary neologism-contraction on a house ("House for the workers of drama and literature"). All translators but Aplin opted for the transliteration "Dramlit" (Ginsburg: 256; Glenny: 271; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 236), with Burgin and O'Connor (2002) as well as Karpelson (240) using capital letters, transliterating the term as „DRAMLIT." It is unclear why Aplin used a partial transliteration „Dramwrit" (241); perhaps he tried to demonstrate the process of syllable contraction for creating Sovietisms. The reason for using capital letters in Burgin and O'Connor's and Karpelson's ver-

sions are also unclear, as the syllabic contraction “Dramlit” is not an acronym.<sup>5</sup> In short, the translators’ choice to keep the original word by transliteration is logical, as this *Sovietism* should not be hard to decipher, even though Margarita could not.

Transliteration with or without explanations also occurs when translating the name of a drink, *Абрау-Дурсо*, *the famous Soviet champagne*, rendered as „Abrau-Durso” in all translations but Glenny’s, which uses a generalised adaptation „champagne bottle” (Glenny: 242). In two translations, the term is incorrectly modified as “wine” (Ginsburg: 230 and Pevear and Volokhonsky: 212) and only in one, with „champagne” (Burgin and O’Connor: 178). Burgin and O’Connor also offered an extra-textual gloss (344). The transliteration “Abrau-Durso” without explanation was used by Karpelson (166) and Aplin (215).

A transliteration, a transliteration combined with an intra-textual explanation, and an adaptation occur in the translations of the compound in the twenty-eighth chapter, in which Woland’s servants Koroviev and Begemoth go to a “ТОРГСИН,” (Bulgakov1988: 395) a *currency store*, which offered a great variety of goods in exchange for foreign currency. In Ginsburg’s translation, which was based on a censored version, the term is deleted. Otherwise, all translators except for Pevear and Volokhonsky opted for a transliteration with or without intra-textual explanations, „Torgsin Store” (Glenny: 391 and Burgin and O’Connor: 298), “Torgsin foreign currency store” (Karpelson: 354) and “Torgsin” (Aplin: 353), thus keeping the original name and preserving the foreign spirit, hence at the same time making the term clear to readers. Pevear and Volokhonsky’s literal translation “a currency store” (347) is also acceptable, though not consistent with the otherwise overall foreignising strategy in their translations. Aplin’s transliteration without a gloss is consistent with a foreignising method but may cause problems for English-speaking readers. We find extra-textu-

<sup>5</sup> Acronyms are formed by taking the initial letters of several words and making a new word, a neologism-Sovietism, out of them (ChK, e.g. is an acronym for Chrezvychainaia kommissia, the name of the first Soviet secret police), while a contraction is a combination of syllables from different words.

al glosses in Pevear and Volokhonsky's (412), Karpelson's (416) and Aplin's (410) translations, while in Ginsburg's translation, the whole part of the text in which the term is used is deleted.

As the next example illustrates, a semi-transliteration does not always guarantee the successful rendering of a term. The *Sovietism* пилатчина, a contemptuous description of the Master's work by one of the critics, used by the Master, who talks about negative reviews he was given by critics after the publication of his novel on Pontius Pilate, was equally transliterated by all translators as "pilatism" (Ginsburg: 161; Glenny: 167; Burgin and O'Connor: 120; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 144; Karpelson: 111, and Aplin: 144) but an extra-textual explanation can only be found in the Burgin and O'Connor (348) and the Karpelson (311) translations. The problem is that an English-speaking reader is most likely unaware of the word-formation process in the Soviet Union, whereby the suffix "chin" was usually attached to *Sovietisms* that described a negative, even an insulting, term. The English suffix "ism" (implying state, system of doctrines) does not illustrate the negative connotations attached to the original word and these are crucial for illustrating how the Master's life-work was destroyed by the critics.

### 5. Literal translation

Literal translation is sometimes also used consistently by all translators as in the example of "спекулирует валютой" (Bulgakov: 1988: 473), dealing in foreign currency, which deserves special attention, as speculating in foreign currency was a capital crime in the Soviet Union. The term occurs in the fifth chapter when the chairman of the tenants' organisation is arrested for taking a bribe in a foreign currency. In this case, an addition outside the text seems necessary in order to avoid the misinterpretation that the chairman was arrested for taking a bribe and not because he possessed foreign currency, restrictions on possessing foreign currency being unfamiliar to a Western reader. All translators opted for a literal translation, the difference being in the use of ex-

planations inside and outside the text. Additions outside the text are offered in Burgin and O'Connor's, Pevear and Volokhonsky's and Aplin's translations. Glenny and Karpelson did not use explanations outside the text but opted for preserving the content by using literal translation with an intra-textual addition. Glenny's "dealing in black-market foreign currency" (97) and Karpelson's explanatory "illegally speculating in foreign currency" (100) are good options for clarifying the context without deforming the text with overly long explanations. Glenny's expanded translation also illustrates the primary idea of an illegal act well, as the neutral verb "to deal", which does not evoke any negative connotations is coupled with "black-market", with strong negative connotations attached. Other translators opted for "speculating in foreign currency" (Burgin and O'Connor: 82; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 112) and „speculated in foreign exchange" (Ginsburg: 112). A literal translation with the verb "to speculate", "to invest money in ways that could produce a large profit but that also involve a lot of risk" (The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary based on the print version of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*), though following foreignized translation strategies, may not be sufficient to clarify that the chairman's action was illegal.

The same connotations occur in the eighteenth chapter in which the same chairman dreams about going to court for speculating in foreign currency. The expression "валютчики" (Bulgakov 1988: 532) used in the original, refers to those who illegally bought and sold foreign currency. The term is deleted in Ginsburg's translations. Burgin and O'Connor (136), Karpelson (127) and Aplin (124) opted for the translation "speculators," which may not be very clear due to another meaning of the verb "to speculate" in English, "to take to be true on the basis of insufficient evidence" (Merriam-Webster dictionary), though an attentive reader would certainly understand that the term is used in the meaning of "speculators in foreign currency". Glenny missed the original meaning by using „currency racketeers," (143) a term associated with organized crime, usually involving intimidation. Pevear and Volo-

honsky's choice of "currency dealers" (163), accompanied by an addition "currency" is probably the best option as it transfers the original meaning well without confusing the readers.

Literal translation occurs less consistently when translating the term *grazhdanin* (citizen). In the Moscow chapters, Bulgakov introduces the Soviet environment not only by mapping the familiar setting of Moscow with precise detail, but also by using a typical Soviet form of address, which, after the October revolution, together with *tovarishch* (comrade) quickly replaced the previous terms of address *sudar'* and *sudarynia*. The term is mentioned for the first time at the beginning of the first chapter when "два гражданина" (Bulgakov 1988: 386), *two citizens*, professor Berlioz and a poet, Ivan Bezdomny, appear at Patriarch's Ponds where they meet Satan, disguised as Woland, a professor of black magic. It is unclear why only Ginsburg (3), Pevear and Volokhonsky (7) and Aplin (4) opted for preserving the semantics with the literal translation "two citizens", as it is clear from the context that the "two citizens" are Professor Berlioz and Ivan Bezdomny. Glenny's (4) and Burgin and O'Connor's (3) globalisation with a more general term "two men" makes the Soviet setting more elusive. The inconsistency in Burgin and O'Connor's translation is even more surprising, as the translators translated the same term literally in the fifth chapter. Karpelson's domesticated localisation with "two gentlemen" (4) taken from an entirely different cultural context is even less successful and confusing. Moreover, it causes a loss of spatial orientation. The domesticating word "gentleman" is contrary to the usual function of domestication – to make the strange familiar – here making the familiar strange. The translators who opted for adaptations ignored the author's intention not only to map the (to him) familiar setting of the Soviet world but also to establish a clear contrast between Soviet *citizens* and Woland, who appears on the third page of the chapter and is referred to as *chelovek*, a *man*, a word that is mentioned four times in a five-sentence paragraph and is translated literally by all translators. Woland is clearly not a "citizen" of the Soviet state.

The word “гражданин” is used so often in the original that the analysis of all English translations would require a separate chapter. Instead, I will focus only on one more example in which the translators’ choices were different, as the previous example illustrates. Thus, in the fifth chapter, Woland and his assistants organize a show of black magic in the Variety theatre, performing various tricks that reveal Moscovites’ vanity and greed. The master of ceremonies, George Bengalsky, addresses the spectators with the plural form “граждане”, *citizens*. This time Ginsburg (193), Burgin and O’Connor (103), Pevear and Volokhonsky (125), and Aplin (125) opted for the preservation of the content with the literal translation “citizens”, while Karpelson (125) and Glenny (65) substituted the term with the domesticated adaptation “ladies and gentlemen”, using the strategy of localisation. A clear distinction between genders in Karpelson’s and Glenny’s translation erases one of the most significant characteristics of the Soviet discourse in which both genders were addressed with the same inclusive term. The adaptations completely destroy the original’s authentic Soviet speech, which reveals the de-personalization of the Soviet people who were denied not only personality but even gender.

We have a similar example when one of the spectators demands that Woland reveal how he performed his tricks. The original address “гражданин артист,” *citizen artist*, should transfer the humorous paradox of the situation in which Satan, the Lord of darkness, whose power is only second to God’s, is addressed with the equalizing “citizen.” Arguably, the combination is also oxymoronic in the sense that an artist is unique and should not be subsumed under the term “citizen,” with its all-encompassing semantics. The address also reveals the stubborn refusal of the propagandised Soviet people to accept the supernatural and to perceive in Woland someone who is not a “citizen” even after having witnessed a number of miracles that could not be explained in any materialistic way: the decapitation of a man who is subsequently resurrected, money falling from the ceiling, and so forth. It seems the word „citizen” has a hypnotic effect on the

audience, blinding them to any de-automatisation. While other translators decided for a preservation of the content, translating literally “citizen artist” (Ginsburg: 144) and “citizen artiste” (Burgin and O’Connor: 107; Pevear and Volokhonsky: 130 and Aplin: 130), Glenny’s localisation with “sir” (68) completely destroys the complex humorous effect, as does Karpelson’s domesticated translation “mister artist”.

Literal translation also occurs inconsistently in a dialogue between a frightened professor Berlioz and his friend Ivan Bezdomny. Berlioz intends to inform the “бюро иностранцев” (Bulgakov 1988: 47), “foreigner’s bureau” that Woland is insane and should be transported to a mental institution. The term was typical only to the Soviet environment where each foreigner coming to the Soviet Union had to register and a special branch of the NKVD was assigned the task of observing foreigners in Russia.<sup>6</sup> Surprisingly, it is explained only in Burgin and O’Connor’s translation, which claims that “this organization fulfilled both travel agent and spy functions” (1995: 349). The use of an explanation seems to be a good option, as Western readers may be unfamiliar with this term and all the attached connotations. Glenny “the Aliens’ Bureau,” (45) Aplin (43) and Pevear and Volokhonsky “Foreigners’ Bureau,” (56) used literal translation, while Karpelson’s generalised „travellers’ Bureau” (43) missed the crucial characteristic of the Bureau being meant only for foreigners. Burgin and O’Connor used intra-textual expansions “the office in charge of foreigners,” (35) as did Ginsburg with “the department in charge of foreign visitors.” (47)

## 6. Conclusion

Retranslations may be inspired by previous translation(s), the wish to improve on, or to modernize them, or may be produced

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<sup>6</sup> Special hotels were designated for foreign visitors and special bureaus were appointed the task of not only providing the visitors with regular help such as organising tours but also spying on them.

without any awareness of a pre-existing translation. Though I could not find any hard evidence one way or the other, the translators discussed above are unlikely to have been unfamiliar with previous translations.

Berman's claim that a subsequent translation is likely to bring a significant improvement as compared to previous translations, is hard to verify, for one thing because the meaning of "improvement" is vague. Even a foreignizing translation may be unsuccessful – it seems that making foreignization the only criteria of "value" is insufficient. All we can speak about is an assessment of the domesticating and foreignizing strategies used by the various translators and, consequently, the degree of closeness to the original. The results of my modest testing of the Retranslation Hypothesis demonstrate that all translators used similar foreignizing strategies: (a) transliteration, (b) calques and (c) literal translation, sometimes combined with additions inside and outside the text. The data presented in the above analysis largely contradicts the Retranslation Hypothesis, as one cannot trace a steady increase of foreignizing strategies as time passes. While tendencies toward foreignization are undoubtedly evident in Burgin and O'Connor's, Pevear and Volokhonsky's and Aplin's translations, as discussed in the analysis, Ginsburg's translation, which was the first, is rather source-oriented at times and shows less naturalisation and domestication than theirs. On the other hand, Karpelson's recent translation tends to minimise Sovietisms and thus be fairly target-oriented. In other words, the Retranslation Hypothesis is not confirmed by my findings, at least as far as realia-Sovietisms are concerned.

Burgin and O'Connor's, Pevear and Volokhonsky's, and Aplin's translations use foreignizing elements more or less consistently; the differences between them are found largely in the use of intra- and extra-textual explanations. Aplin's translation shows a clear foreignizing tendency. Transliterations and literal translation occur in almost the same examples as in Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, as well as in Burgin and O'Connor's, though these instances are seldom combined with intra-textual additions. Surprisingly, Karpelson's translation is more naturalised and closer to the target audience than the preceding translations.



Re-translations offer a unique opportunity for scholars to follow translating tendencies over time. Even though it was impossible, due to the number of the case texts, to assess all examples in the current study, some tendencies emerged. In partial support of the Retranslation Hypothesis, it can be claimed that the Hypothesis is valid to some extent, as later translations opted for more foreignizing tendencies than earlier ones. Yet, as the results of the analysis demonstrated, retranslations do not always constitute “improvements” over earlier versions and do not necessarily mean a “normal” progression toward foreignizing. Karpelson clearly opted for a domestication of the text even though his is the penultimate translation. Thus, the Hypothesis can hardly be valid for all retranslations, as each translation should be evaluated as an individual and unique act of cultural transference, impacted by historical, political, cultural and other factors, not least the focus on addressing the target audience.

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