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## Crossing Boundaries: the Translation and Cultural Adaptation of Folk Narratives

It is one of the paradoxes of folk narrative research that the translation and the transcultural adaptation of folklore texts have received so little attention so far. This lack of scholarly interest is surprising insofar as folkloristics and ethnology, from their beginnings in the late 18th century, had a keen interest in other cultures – and they began with translations. In the same way as Herder translated folk songs from many European languages, MacPherson Gaelic songs into English, and Goethe Serbian epics (through an intermediate Italian text) into German, ethnologists, travellers, and collectors translated innumerable myths and tales, epic poetry and songs into their own (European) languages. Folkloristics had an international orientation before it turned to a more romantic and national agenda that stressed the own traditions and demanded less translation. Later in the 19th century, however, new schools and theories with an international or even global orientation turned up such as the Philological school, the Indic theory, and migration theories. The studies of the Finnish school, in particular, produced ample evidence of the fact that folk narratives and songs have always crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries. The scholars of this school, some of whom knew many languages, translated narratives from a host of remote languages, mostly for the sake of comparative analysis; in their studies they discussed the differences between variants or oikotypes from different parts of the world in detail; some of them even paid closer attention to the processes of cultural adaptation of migratory tales or ballads.

However, the problem of how the narratives and songs had crossed all these linguistic boundaries, the process of translation itself, went almost entirely unnoticed, both in folkloristics and, as Axel Schmalfuß noted (1972, 288), in cultural anthropology as well. Translation was obviously taken as self-explanatory and unproblematic, and as a consequence many important questions remained unasked. How does the translation of folklore texts function? Does it differ from literary translation? Who were the translators? Were they, in former centuries, merchants, sailors, soldiers, hawkers or minstrels, or were they rather scribes, teachers, ministers, or even poets? In other words: were (and are) they educated, semi-educated or uneducated persons? What role do bilingualism or multilingualism play, and are multiethnic, bilingual or border regions the typical areas of transfer from one language to another? What about bilingual audiences, bilingual narratives, and code switching? How, on what occasions, and for what audiences was and is a translation undertaken? What methods of translation are

applied and what changes made? What levels and elements of the text are adapted to the recipient culture? What is translatable and what is not? And are there significant differences in the translatability of narrative genres? These are only some of the questions that need to be asked if we want to gain a deeper understanding of how folklore texts are communicated across linguistic and cultural boundaries (cf. also, e.g., Dollerup et al. 1984, 263 sq.; Michaelis-Jena 1975, 186; Zirnbauer 1975, 205, 208 sq.).

At a time when ethnology and cultural anthropology consider the ethnographic representation of other cultures as an act of translation between cultures (cf. Bachmann-Medick 1997b, 2), and translation theory has taken a turn from text to context and from linguistics to culture and ethnography (cf. Bachmann-Medick 1997a; Dingwaney/Maier 1995), it is becoming for folkloristics to direct the focus of its research to the interlingual and intercultural dimensions of narration. This need is further amplified by the fact that in our globalizing world with its multinational states, international organizations, and worldwide communication everyday narration is increasingly translated into foreign languages, or it is carried out in a *lingua franca* altogether. Today, narratives such as urban legends and jokes cross linguistic and cultural boundaries with great ease and at the speed of the telephone or the Internet. Folkloristics must be aware of the problems arising from this interlingual and intercultural communication.

This is not the place to discuss the various linguistic, rhetorical, semiotic or other approaches in translation theory (cf. Bell 1991; Frawley 1983; Biguenet 1989; Sorvali 1996). Most of them focus on the very act of (literary) translation or simultaneous interpretation, but only part of their findings bear on folkloristic translation. So I can be brief. According to traditional translation theory, translation is the linguistic transformation of a text from a source language into a target language, and its goal is, more precisely, “the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text” (Bell 1991, xv). Consequently, theoretical reflections concentrated on textual aspects, i.e., on linguistic, stylistic, phonetic, or rhetorical problems, and proceeded to semantic aspects of translation, particularly the problem of ‘equivalence’ and ‘total synonymity’ between the source text and the target text.

Experience has shown, however, that in reality “the ideal of total equivalence is a chimera” (Bell 1991, 6). Meanings never coincide totally between languages, and the highly complex process of translation involves far more than merely the explicit text itself. As a consequence, recent approaches to translation theory focus on contextual aspects. They view a language as a part and an expression of a given culture and social group, as a code transporting cultural practices and habits, values and norms, concepts and world views. Apart from the dimensions of the explicit text and its denotations, the implicit meanings and connotations, the references to other sectors of the culture and the society, to its specific historical experience and present life-world have to be considered as well. For these

dimensions there can obviously be no 'total equivalence' but only approximation depending on the translator's interpretation, i.e., his attempts to make sense of a message encoded in a foreign language. Thereby, the person of the translator as an interpreter of cultures and as a mediator between them receives full recognition, and with him the act of translating as a creative process, and the translation as a result of interpretation and contextualization as well. Translation was, from this perspective, the ingenious construction of a new code. Viewing translation as a recodification and the translated text as an interpretation is of extreme value for the folkloristic approach, as it captures much more precisely what happens in the translation of folk narratives and songs.

From the perspective of folklore theory, the translator merely creates yet another variant of a tale or song which is then gradually assimilated to the style and world view of the recipient culture. Viewing the translator's job as an act of re-creative transformation is, in principle, correct. But subsuming translation under 're-creation' or 'modification' does not do justice to the specific competences and to the achievements of the translator who, by virtue of his linguistic skills and through a process of poetic creation, makes foreign worlds accessible and intelligible; he achieves this by replacing unfamiliar sounds and concepts with familiar ones, by re-telling and re-writing, by altering and adapting, and, if necessary, by reducing and adding. Translators are cultural mediators, be they ordinary folk, or be they poets, professionals or scholars. Their activity should therefore be appreciated as a specific kind of creative or re-creative achievement.

The contextual approach to translation has two more benefits for us. It considers translating as a process of communication between author, translator, and recipient, and it considers the entire social context and the 'politics of translation', i.e., the relevant power relations underlying the translation. Furthermore, and very importantly, it views translating as communication between cultures. It is indeed of great relevance that translations of folklore texts are crossings of the boundary between the 'other' and the 'own' and are representations or transformations of cultural otherness.

Before taking a closer look at the folkloristic aspects of translation some distinctions have to be made. The observation of recent translation theory that translation is recodification, i.e., the transfer from one code to another code is helpful for folkloristics insofar as it widens the scope. Translation denotes more than linguistic transformation, as language is only one kind of code. In principle, the transfer from one genre into another genre, or from one medium into another medium (oral to pictorial, written to oral, etc.) could also be called 'translation'. It is more in keeping with the history of folkloristics, however, to refrain from this wider definition. Instead, the transfer from the oral to the written should be called 'transcription' and be set apart from 'translation'. One must, however, be aware of the fact that many collectors and scholars who transcribed oral texts have, wittingly or unwittingly, regularly translated these texts from dialects or sociolects into a standard or national language, particularly during the 19th century. This observation leads to the important question of

what is a 'language'. Unlike the literary translator who is typically concerned with standardized or national languages, the folklorist more often has to do with unstandardized regional languages and idioms, with vernaculars, dialects or sociolects. The term 'code' is useful insofar as it comprises all these linguistic varieties and denotes all transfers between them as 'translations'.

Culture and language are closely related but are not identical with each other. Languages are 'exported' to other continents and cultures, and the same (or a similar) culture can be shared by people speaking very different languages. Departing from rather vague and subjective definitions of linguistic and cultural 'sameness', 'similarity', and 'difference', one can discern four relationships between language and culture that are relevant for the linguistic recodification of folklore texts:

1. The recodification of folklore texts within the same language or between very similar languages within the same cultural environment can be called 'intracultural translation' (cf. Schmalfuß 1972, 287). This denotes the transformation between dialects, idioms or sociolects, but also between very closely related languages (such as Swedish and Norwegian, Bulgarian and Macedonian) in the context of same or similar life-worlds and shared beliefs and concepts. This kind of transformation is often carried out almost unwittingly and is not felt to be a proper translation. But misrepresentations can result precisely from the closeness of the idioms, for example if one and the same word or phrase carries different meanings in two related idioms.

2. The recodification within the same language or between very similar languages, but in different cultural environments, is more of a cultural adaptation than a translation, although it always involves some degree of linguistic transformation. British ballads, Spanish cuentos, and French tales underwent specific adaptive changes after they had crossed the Atlantic. When these tales and songs reached the colonies in Africa or Asia, their assimilation to the different life-worlds and local cultures was even more significant.

3. The recodification into different languages in the same cultural environment is a process that is extremely common in multinational empires or in multiethnic states. In the Balkans, for example, bilingualism or multilingualism was wide-spread and translating was an everyday necessity. Translating tales from one Balkan language into another was a common and relatively easy practice because the Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians or Turks, although their languages are very different, shared the same or very similar life-worlds and experiences, beliefs and concepts; this is demonstrated, for example, by the many proverbs which (only) the Balkan peoples share. On the Balkan peninsula as well as in other parts of the world, e.g. in Russia or on the Indian subcontinent, translating was (and is) so habitual that one can speak of a 'culture of translating'.

4. The recodification of folklore texts into different languages in different cultural environments is certainly the most difficult kind of translation as it involves both an interlingual and an intercultural transformation. Translating east African or Navaho narratives into English is certainly as difficult a task as

rendering the tales of Charles Perrault or Hans Christian Andersen in Chinese or Japanese or the Grimms' *Household Tales* in Indian languages (cf. Carlos 1998). The differences in the life-worlds and in basic ideas usually require a re-writing of the original text according to the needs of the target culture rather than an exact translation.

The translation of folklore texts occurs either in well-established contexts or environments (macro-contexts) or at specific occasions or in situations of cultural or linguistic interface (micro-contexts). The limited number of traditional contexts is increased, however, by modern contexts of growing importance. The contexts are characterized by different levels of linguistic or cultural difference.

1. In the context of nation states, translation or adaptation of folklore texts happens typically between regional languages, dialects, or sociolects. However, in multinational empires or states, in countries consisting of peoples speaking different languages (such as Switzerland, Belgium or South Africa) or in countries with larger ethnic minorities (such as Romania, Finland, or Spain), speaking two or more languages and translating are wide-spread practices. As a result of direct interethnic contacts, there are many narrators who can present stories, tell jokes, or sing songs in more than one language.

2. Direct culture contact is also the rule between neighbouring countries or peoples. Particularly border zones and overlapping language areas with high rates of bilingualism (such as Alsatia or Southern Slovakia) usually form contexts of neighbourly relations and exchange. The permanent flow of information is facilitated if the languages are closely related, like for example the Scandinavian or the South Slavic languages.

3. The modern world with its rapid internationalization and globalization in many fields has created new contexts of direct culture contact on an everyday basis. Large-scale work-migration as well as the growing number of large international corporations, institutions, and organizations with multinational work forces require a great deal of translation and bilingualism that, of course, also extends to everyday narration and to folklore genres. The folklore of the multinational company or of the international institution has yet to be studied, but one can safely assume that translation plays a major role.

4. Long-term contacts between geographically distant countries and peoples have in many cases engendered a context of 'distant closeness'. Economic and trade relations of seafaring peoples, for example, have always heavily contributed to the diffusion (and translation) of narratives. The strongest cultural influence, however, has resulted from hegemonial, in particular from colonial relations. While the languages involved are completely different, the long-term culture contact usually brought about a certain degree of familiarity and closeness. Colonialism has thus engendered a strong tradition of folkloric translation based on clear power relations, i.e., from the language of the colonized into the language of the colonizer.

5. The same direction of folkloric translation into a European language is the

rule, finally, in the remaining cases of culture contact between distant countries with unrelated languages and without hegemonial relations. The translation of Central or East Asian tales into European languages is a case in point.

It is particularly the latter two relationships which show that even folkloric translation is subjected to the rules of power and hierarchy. The 'politics of translation' are indeed a problem for folkloristics that needs further discussion. Translation is a first step in the process of adaptation and appropriation of foreign cultures. This process is only rarely a two-way flow. In most cases it was, and continues to be, a one-way street. Many authors (cf. Dingwaney/Maier 1995) have noted a fundamental asymmetry and inequality between languages and speak of a 'European privilege of translation' which only reflects colonial and post-colonial global power relations (cf. Dingwaney 1995). The vast majority of folklore texts were translated from a non-European (or peripheral European) language into one of the major European languages in an attempt to grasp and make sense of the 'other', mostly the 'exotic' oriental cultures.

It was the impulse of European Enlightenment that inspired travelers, missionaries, and scholars alike to systematically explore foreign peoples and to explain and interpret their cultures and languages. Knowledge of these exotic cultures was frequently gathered from their myths, tales, legends, epics and songs. Translating them into a European language was to unravel the deeper, hidden dimensions of these cultures and to make them accessible to Western minds. But it also domesticated their otherness by translating their concepts and practices into familiar Western concepts — and in many cases this laid the basis for control and hegemony. The Western countries do not only have the power of definition, as Edward Saïd (1995) noted, but also determine what literature and what folklore texts are translated and what are not. Until today, they have full sway over global literary production. By virtue of this they exert power over the original cultures. The myths, tales, and songs of many peoples of the world were translated and published in Western languages before they appeared in their native languages; in some African, South American or Asian countries, native ethnologists today are faced with the necessity to reconstruct the history of their own cultures from Western representations of them. One may add that all the major series of *märchen* translations have been published in the major European languages (*Folktales of the World*, *Die Märchen der Weltliteratur*, *Skazki narodov mira*, etc.).

Translations of myths, tales and epics have certainly contributed to the better understanding of foreign cultures and to their acceptance. Depending on the abilities and intentions of the translators and on their selection, however, they often function as popularizations of stereotypical images and as promoters of exotism or orientalism. Popular translations of myths and tales, of songs and epics have often portrayed other peoples in rather simplified terms and have coined lasting images of them as heroic or primitive, as treacherous or naïve, as peaceful or brutal.

On the other hand there are, of course, translations of Western literature and

tales into non-Western languages. The tales of Perrault, Grimm, Andersen and others have been translated into many languages of the world. But this export of culture was and is based on very different premises. Translations of Western popular literature and folktales were part of cultural politics, and they were (and sometimes still are) instrumental in the process of modernization and Westernization (cf. Roth 1995). In many countries, one of the side effects of this cultural globalization was that the translated tales pushed aside or even replaced the indigenous narrative traditions (cf. Roth 1989, 217).

As I noted earlier, translation theory has abandoned the idea of 'total equivalence' and stresses the translator's interpretation and the ideas of approximation, variation, and context. In spite of this 'ethnographic turn' in literary translation theory, however, there still remains a clear preference for "getting as close as possible to the original text". This goal was explicitly stated by Lawrence Venuti (1993, 210) who differentiated between two methods of translating the 'other', (a) the 'domesticating method' and (b) the 'foreignizing method', and clearly favoured the latter one. Venuti considers the 'domesticating method' as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home", whereas the 'foreignizing method' constitutes "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad". While the first method eliminates cultural otherness, the latter method of literal translation retains it and tries to represent the different ways of life, practices, concepts, and world views of the original text.

This is precisely where the folklorist is again made aware of the difference between literary and folkloristic communication (cf. Bogatyrev/Jakobson 1929; Assmann 1983) — and is faced with the verdict of 'ethnocentrism'. Unlike the literary translator, the folkloric translator is not interested in 'otherness' as such but wants to render a good story or an interesting ballad. Cultural differences are eliminated, and the 'other' is 'domesticated', i.e., transformed into the 'own'. Of course there is 'otherness' in folklore texts, but the 'other' is usually represented as menacing and in a symbolic way, for example by means of stereotypical villains or demons (cf. Kerbelité 1987; Shojaei Kawan 1998, esp. 574 sq.). If this is ethnocentrism, it is certainly not a conscious one but stems from the popular desire for the well-known and the familiar.

The cultural adaptation and assimilation of foreign subject matter thus appears to be the rule for folkloristic communication. The very nature of folklore and of its diffusion excludes literal translations and the striving for formal and semantic equivalence almost by definition. Translation is but one more link in the chain of diffusion of folktales which is a continuous process of adaptation to the tastes and needs of narrators and audiences. Lauri Honko stressed this tendency of folkloric adaptation in 1981 and differentiated between several kinds of adaptation, namely milieu-morphological, tradition-morphological, and functional adaptation (Honko 1981). The second one, tradition-morphological adaptation, must concern us here, as it denotes the adaptation of a narrative to another cul-

tural system, usually by means of translation. The details of this process of ‘cultural translation’ of oral tradition are hardly known because it leaves few traces.

Possibly folklorists have not tried hard enough to find evidence, because neither the processes of translation and adaptation of oral tradition nor their results have as yet been studied. But traces there are, like, for example, Friedrich L. Meyer’s translation of the popular English ballad *Our Goodman* published in Göttingen in 1790. Meyer translated the humorous ballad and adapted it to the style of German folksong in such a sensitive manner that it “had great and immediate success, was circulated as a broadside, and was taken up by the people” (Child 1898, 89). The translation spread over the entire German language area and was subsequently translated into other languages (Roth 1977, 49, 141).

It is fortunate that translations of popular literature or chapbook literature, which also follows the rules of folkloristic communication (Assmann 1983), also offer insights into the processes of translation and cultural adaptation that might be relevant for oral tradition. Southeast European popular literature shows that Western texts were changed profoundly and adapted not only to their new milieu and society, but also to its system of values and norms, beliefs and concepts (cf. Roth 1995). Most of these transformations were rewritings (or ‘imitations’) rather than translations; the foreign texts were acculturated to the tradition of the target society in such a way that in many cases the original language or culture were no longer recognizable by the Balkan reader. This ‘domestication’ was so common that it had its own names in the Balkan countries, such as *posrbe* (Milinčević 1984), *pobългарjavane* (Minčev 1912) or *Hellenization*, and was considered necessary by the educated elites and the translators, at least until the beginning of the 20th century. Consecutive translations of 19th century German popular novels and of Grimms’ tales show, however, that the degree of cultural assimilation gradually decreased as literacy spread and readers learnt to accept otherness and to comprehend foreign worlds (Roth 1995, 611; cf. Lönker 1992).

The words and their meanings, the motifs and themes as well as the poetic form, the style, and the performance of a folklore text are culture-specific. Even if the motifs and themes are international, the culture-specific may reside in their combination and in the elaboration of the details and traits or in the meaning they convey. Folkloric translation is therefore to be regarded as an intercultural discourse through which a text in one cultural code is transformed and assimilated into another cultural code on all these levels. If we want to analyse a translated text, we have to take all levels into account. For my own analyses of translated popular literature I have found it useful to differentiate between three levels (cf. Roth 1995):

1. On the level of language, we have to consider the kind of languages (or dialects) involved, their grammar, syntax, and structure, and to compare the use of words, phrases, and narrative formulae both in the source and target texts. The relevance of language structure, for example, can be demonstrated by a seemingly minor aspect that may, however, have serious consequences for the translation of folklore texts: grammatical gender. In most Indo-European languages, super-

natural beings and animals have a grammatical gender which is often relevant for the plot (cf. Burkhart 1982, 208 sq.): Death is female in Romance and Slavic languages, but male in Germanic languages, just as the frog is female in Slavic languages and in French while it is male in German (cf. KHM 1: *Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich*). Translating such tales confronts the translator with the necessity of changing the personages or even the logic of the whole story.

2. On the level of style and performance, the analysis must focus on those elements that bear on the performance of the narrative or song, i.e., on narrative style and rhetoric, on metrics and prosody, and on styles of presentation. How was the style of Arab tales and tale-telling transformed into the typical style and rhetorics of European *märchen*? In which way did the style of European tales change when they were translated into North American Indian languages? In translations of the Grimms' tales into Indian languages, for example, dialogues are usually transformed into prose narration (cf. Carlos 1998).

3. Finally, the level of semantics or of socio-cultural content and meaning has to receive greatest attention. In the process of translation, popular texts, narratives, and songs usually undergo changes that adapt them to the natural and socio-cultural environment of the recipient culture. The translators accommodated their texts to the geography, climate, and natural milieu, to the social milieu and to social relations, to the historical experience and setting, and to the habitual material world of the recipient society; for example, the musical instruments in the Grimms' German tales (drum, lute) are substituted by typical Indian instruments (*katam*, *veema*) in south Indian translations (Carlos 1998) or German dishes and household utensils by Balkan ones (Roth 1989, 1995). In the same manner the translators acculturated the actors of the narratives, changing their names and often also their appearances and characteristic features; sometimes they even introduced new heroes that were familiar to their audience. But the adaptation went much further and concerned also the behaviours and actions of the heroes which were adapted to the habits and customs of the recipient society; for example, 'shaking hands' was rendered as 'speaking to each other' and 'kissing' as 'holding hands' in south Indian adaptations of the Grimms' *Household Tales* (Carlos 1998). On the level of meaning, the translators also adapted the attitudes and religious beliefs, the norms and values, ideals and concepts underlying the heroes' actions (cf. Roth 1995, 609 sq.). As a consequence, even the motivation of actions and the meaning and world-view of tales were changed when they crossed cultural and religious boundaries; the strict catholicism of Christoph von Schmid's popular early 19th century novels, for example, was transformed into Christian Orthodox values in a Greek translation (ibid.). It goes without saying that these changes often entailed changes in the function and intention of the narratives or songs.

The adaptive changes which oral tales and songs underwent when they crossed linguistic, cultural or religious boundaries were probably very similar. This is at least indicated by the numerous studies of the Philological and the Finnish schools, whose authors made valuable observations on the migration, translation,

and adaptation of folktales. The dispersed observations of these numerous scholars deserve a systematical and critical evaluation.

From the fact that in folkloristic communication the author and the 'original text' or language are not relevant, it follows that second, third or fourth language translations are very common. Chains of translations are typical both of oral folklore and of chapbook literature, but also of popular translations of literary folktales. To give some typical examples: AaTh 1417: *The Cut-off Nose* was translated from the Indian *Pañcatantra* into Persian and then into Arabic; the Syrian rendering was translated into Greek, Hebrew, and Spanish; the Greek version was then translated into Slavic languages, while the Hebrew version was translated into Latin which, in turn, was translated into Italian, Czech, French, English, and German; the German version was then translated into Danish, Dutch, and Icelandic (Schulthess 1911, 16–18; cf. Neumann 1999). The Bulgarian translation of Christoph von Schmid's *Die Ostereier*, for example, was based on a 1837 Greek translation which, in turn, had been taken from the French translation of the German novel (Roth 1995). The *Household Tales* were translated into the various Indian languages not from the German original, but from its English translation (Carlos 1998). The role of chain or multiple translations for folk tradition has not yet been discussed.

Likewise, the question of translatability and adequacy of translation of folklore texts is unresolved. It concerns, on the one hand, the problem of mistranslation either due to ignorance or misunderstanding or due to intentional distortion for ideological, political, moral ('purification'), commercial or other reasons. On the other hand it concerns the fact that some folklore genres and subject matters lend themselves more easily to translation than others: action-based jests and jokes are translated much more easily than jokes based on puns or legends based on culture specific concepts and beliefs. Prose genres make translation easier than songs or poems, a fact which explains why sometimes verses in tales or refrains in songs are left in the original language in which they apparently have a poetic quality that is deemed untranslatable.

While folkloric translations are 'domestications' almost by definition, scholars usually have the opposite goal. In their attempt to elucidate foreign cultures they want to render the form, the contents, and the spirit of the original text as faithfully as possible and will therefore use the 'foreignizing method' of translation (cf. Derive 1975). But it is precisely this method which has raised the question whether other cultures can be represented and translated at all. Can even the most faithful translation of, let us say, Japanese folktales really convey all their connotations and deeper levels of meaning to European readers? And can such a translation of the *Household Tales* convey the ideological contents of Grimms' *märchen* to the Asian reader? Quite obviously there are limits to the representation of cultural otherness (cf. Lönker 1992; Hammerschmid/Krapoth 1997).

The distinction between folkloric (or primary) and scholarly (or secondary) translation coincides in most cases with the distinction between synchronic and diachronic translation. Oral folklore texts and everyday narration are, as a

rule, translated spontaneously and are therefore synchronic translations, while literary or scholarly translations are usually based on written sources and are thus diachronic translations of historical texts.

As a kind of summary, the above findings can tentatively be united into a systematic survey of the fields in which translation is relevant for folkloristics. The survey is based on the distinctions proposed above, namely on the differences

- between the oral and the written (or printed) text,
- between folkloristic and literary communication (Bogatyrev/Jakobson 1929; Assmann 1983),
- between the ‘foreignizing’ and the ‘domesticating’ methods of translation, resp., ‘faithful’ translation and adaptation,
- between primary (everyday) and secondary (scholarly or artistic) translation,
- between synchronic and diachronic translation,
- and between first language and chain translation.

1. Translation of oral tradition as part of folkloristic communication is certainly the most frequent transformation, but also the most difficult one to elucidate; to my knowledge there are no empirical studies of actual processes of translation of orally communicated narratives and of the translators’ techniques. Folkloric translation is predominantly synchronic and it is ‘domesticating’. It occurs mostly in contact zones, in multiethnic or multilingual societies or (today) in international institutions. The migration of narratives presupposes multiple or chain translations. There are marked differences in the translatability of narrative genres.

2. Translation was and is very common in popular literature (or chapbook literature) which is printed but follows the laws of folkloristic communication (Assmann 1983). This ‘intermediate literature’ of broadsides, chapbooks, novels or *Volksbücher* regularly imported subject matter from other languages, either from elite literature, popular literature or oral tradition. Translation can be either synchronic or diachronic, and chain translations are common. The domesticating method of translation prevailed, at least until the 19th century.

3. In the field of oral tradition as literary communication translation appears to have been less frequent. The Southeast European example shows, however, that heroic poetry was also translated by bilingual epic singers who could render their songs and genealogies both in Serbian and Albanian. As authoritative oral history, the epic songs and genealogies probably required a more exact translation. Since the late 18th century, Balkan epic poetry has often been translated either by poets in literary fashion, for example by Herder and Goethe, or by scholars, as for example by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, in a ‘foreignizing’ manner.

4. Translation in the realm of literary tradition as literary communication, in the ‘great tradition’, is the one that has been best documented and

studied. From the point of view of folkloristics, the translation and literarization of folk narratives and the translation of literarized folktales is of importance. It was almost invariably undertaken by scholars or poets who usually tried to capture the spirit of the foreign text as best they could. Depending on the readers' capacity and willingness to enter foreign worlds, the translators sometimes had to adapt the texts to their readers' culture, as the Southeast European and the south Indian examples show. This tendency was even more pronounced when works of literature (such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or the Andersen tales) or of literarized folklore (such as the *Household Tales*) became part of chapbook literature, where adaptations prevail over faithful translations.

In view of the lack of empirical studies and theoretical reflections on folkloric translation, my contribution could approach the aspects of interlingual and intercultural communication only from a rather general perspective. For the sake of brevity, illustrative examples have largely been left aside. It is to be hoped that folkloristics, in conjunction with ethnology, intercultural communication, literary history, and comparative literature will devote greater attention to narratives that cross linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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