

# RETRANSLATION AS AN (UN)SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-NARRATIVE: *LES FRERES KARAMAZOV* VERSUS *LES FRERES KARAMAZOV*

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*Drawing on Narrative Theory, this article analyses the second French translation of The Brothers Karamazov as a counter-narrative for the novel's first translation into French. In the mid-1880s, the critic Vogüé blocked the introduction of Dostoevsky's narrative by predicting a clash with the French taste. Taking this warning into account, the first French translators Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice in 1888 framed the source narrative by means of selective appropriation and repositioning of the characters. Being accused of mutilation, Halpérine-Kaminsky reacted with the logic of good reasons. In 1906, the reader was presented with a counter-narrative: Les frères Karamazov by Bienstock and Torquet. However, their retranslation, too, was an abbreviated version of the source narrative. Moreover, a micro-textual analysis shows that they largely neutralized the original couleur locale and use of multilingualism, which the first translators in the context of the Russian literary hype, had reproduced to a considerably larger extent. In conclusion, the extraordinary success of the first French translation of The Brothers Karamazov is explained by referring to the normalizing function of narratives. In the long run, however, as a result of the undermining counter-narratives in combination with the so-called 'sleeping effect', neither the narrative invented by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice could withstand the test of time.*

**Keywords:** Dostoevsky, Retranslation Hypothesis, Narrative Theory, couleur locale, multilingualism

## 1. Introduction

Dostoevsky was born exactly two centuries ago, but he still is pretty much alive: he is retranslated on a regular basis, in a multitude of languages. In accordance with the general trend (Skibińska 2015: 237), retranslations of Dostoevsky, too, are legitimized by denouncing shortcomings of previous translations (Boulogne 2019a). Such a marketing strategy is consistent with the Retranslation Hypothesis, according to which translation is a process of improvement from one retranslation to the next, coming closer and closer to the source text (Paloposki and Koskinen 2004). The generally accepted idea that the first translations to popularize foreign writers are more likely to strive towards acceptability than the translations of the same works that follow, can be explained in polysystemic terms: after all, translation norms vary according to the prestige that can be expected in the host culture (Even-Zohar 1978). The implication is that paradoxically, when a target-oriented translation becomes successful to the extent that it increases the prestige of the work in question, it inevitably undermines itself, by creating the need for



a more source-oriented retranslation. Or, following the suggestion of Siobhan Brownlie (2006) to look at retranslation through the lens of Narrative Theory: it seems that the narrative contained in a first translation of a work by an author yet to be popularized can easily be replaced by a counter-narrative, once the work in question has acquired a certain degree of prestige. This article examines the extent to which these tendencies apply to a milestone in Western European translation history: the first French re-translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

## 2. Blocking the source narrative: the dislike of Vogüé

The fierce breakthrough of Dostoevsky in Western Europe in the 1880s was largely due to the rhetoric talent of the famous critic Eugene-Melchior de Vogüé (1848–1910). With his essays on Russian literature, first published in *Revue des Deux Mondes* and then compiled into the international bestseller *Le Roman Russe*, he was hoping to put an end to the French naturalistic hype surrounding Zola. This is why he framed Dostoevsky by labelling him as a psychologically insightful champion of the humiliated and offended (Boulogne 2015: 181–184).

In line with this selective appreciation, Vogüé proclaimed that the writer's talent was best reflected in his works *Poor Folks*, *Notes from the House of Dead* and *Crime and Punishment*. The author's subsequent big novels, however, he thought to be tedious and confused. The critic was ostentatiously annoyed by the multitude of vague, talkative figures, constantly digging into other people's souls, in *The Brothers Karamazov*. His analysis of the plot was limited to the curious remark that more or less the whole novel was filled with the chitchat of two phrasemongers who try to steal each other's amorous or criminal secrets and converse about religion and philosophy. On Vogüé (1885:349), the characters of the novel make a crazy impression: they never engage in normal activities and are often in a drunken, dreamy or feverish state.

Vogüé's final touch to his barrier against Dostoevsky's narrative was his justification for the briefness of his plot analysis: he asserted that even among the Russians there were very few who had the courage to finish *The Brothers Karamazov*. Incidentally, already in 1884, he had shared this point of view in a personal letter with the publishing house Plon: 'few Russians support reading it, it would certainly put off the French taste' (quoted by Troyat 1942: 615; my translation).

## 3. Framing the source narrative: the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice

Despite Vogüé's warnings, Plon published a translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* as early as 1888. This translation was made by Ilia Halpérine-Kaminsky (1858–1936), an immigrant of Russian origin, and Charles Morice (1860–1919), a symbolist French poet without the command of Russian. Their renewed collaboration was encouraged by the commercial success of their earlier co-translation *L'esprit souterrain* (1886), which is marked by far-



reaching narrative shifts (Boulogne 2019b). As detailed comparative analyses have shown, they have adopted a similar translation strategy to Dostoevsky's latest novel (Hemmings 1950, Boulogne 2011: 399 et seq.).

Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* opens with a two-page preface by a fictional author, who explains why the novel's central character, Alësha, remains so passive: his actions will become more important in the novel to follow. Frank (2003: 573) argues that the preface was primarily meant to justify the preachy tone of the novel, by evoking associations with the genre of hagiography. It is a clear indication of their commitment to the preliminary translation norm of 'acceptability' (Toury 1995: 58), that Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice simply deleted the preface in full, along with all the functions it fulfilled. As Baker (2006: 139) explains, 'erasing the voice of the author/narrator [...] contributes to reconfiguring the balance between personal and public narratives.'

As previously shown by Boulogne (2009), the only point of macrostructural conformity between the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice and the source text, concerns the general way in which the novel is divided in entities: both texts consist of four volumes and a large number of numbered books, which in turn consist of numerous chapters. The thematic titles of the various books were generally adequately translated. The titles of the actual chapters – there are about a hundred – on the other hand, have been systematically omitted. Also the order of the chapters has been modified: in the *Les frères Karamzov* (Dostoïevsky 1888:1–74), the first and second books have been switched places, so that the characters are introduced to the reader in medias res.

Even more drastic for the narrative structure are the gigantic shortenings, which can be described as 'selective appropriation of textual material' (Baker 2006: 114): in *Les frères Karamazov* (1888), a large number of paragraphs and even whole chapters were left out (for an overview, see Hemmings 1950: 232–236). These cuts mainly concern passages that seem irrelevant to the main storyline, such as subplots and dialogues. In total, no less than thirty chapters, a little less than a third of the original number of chapters, have more or less completely been cut. The omissions of integral chapters are fairly evenly distributed throughout the text, in the sense that in each book one or more chapters have been left untranslated. The only exception is the fifth book: all its chapters have been translated. The sixth book, 'A Russian monk', which contains a hagiography of Alësha's mentor, omitted in its entirety. The eleventh book, which focuses on the friendship between Alësha and a young boy, has also been completely left out. On the basis of these chapters, the translators wrote an autonomous short story 'by Dostoevsky', published in 1889 under the title *Les précoces* (*The precocious ones*).

Yet, the most extraordinary interventions are to be found in the epilogue, in which the translators repositioned the participants of the source narrative. Dostoevsky, planning to write a follow-up novel, had left his readers dangling on the cliff. His epilogue consists of only three chapters. The first one, 'The plans to save Dmitry', brings up a vague plan to free Dmitry Karamazov, wrongfully convicted to hard labor in Siberia for the murder of his father, from prison. However, in the two following chapters, this plan is not implemented. The epilogue of *Les frères Karamazov* (1888), consisting of eight



chapters, drastically changes this narrative. While the first two chapters are translated from the corresponding Russian chapters, there is no trace of the original third chapter. Chapters III to VIII of the French translation, in turn, originated from the imagination of Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, who provided the novel with a happy ending full of action: disguised as a peasant, the youngest brother, Alësha Karamazov, manages to break into Dmitry's prison cell, where he deliberately takes his place, whereupon he is put on trial and acquitted (for a more detailed discussion, see Hemmings 1950, Boulogne 2009 and Boulogne 2011: 532–533).

#### 4. Defending the adapted narrative: the logic of good reasons

Despite the above-described narrative shifts, the publication of Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice's translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* in a first instance did not lead to controversy in Paris. Only in April 1911, more than two decades later, the newspaper *Le Figaro* published a piece by André Gide (1869–1951) harshly criticizing their translation strategy. Being fully aware of the influential position of Vogüé as a pioneer critic at the time, the French writer first and foremost blamed him for the lack of genuine interest of the French readership in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

Dostoyevsky... decidedly, was too Russian; M. Vogüé was screaming blue murder. At the very most, he consented to direct the interest of the first translators to the two or three works which he considered the most accessible [...]; but by this same gesture he unfortunately pushed aside his most significant, doubtlessly his most difficult, but also – we dare to say – his most beautiful works. (Gide 1923: 59–60; my translation)

Previously, Gide had read Dostoevsky's works in German and could therefore compare different translations (albeit not with the corresponding Russian source text). The translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice labelled 'a mutilated version' (Gide 1923: 62; my translation). He did not mention the plot twist in the epilogue, but instead focused on the shortenings: 'here and there, whole chapters were amputated' (ibid.). At the same time, he showed quite some understanding for the historical context, which had made it difficult for the translators to provide the French readership with a source-oriented translation. The reader, however, had the right to know that the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice was a greatly shortened version: 'I will therefore only blame it for not admitting its incompleteness.' (Gide 1923: 62; my translation).

In 1923, the piece by Gide, now an established writer, reappeared as a part of his collection of essays on Dostoevsky. Halpérine-Kaminsky, receiving in the very same year the Langlois award from the Académie Française for his literary translations, felt the need to stand up for himself. He retorted in prefaces that he added to reissues of his translations *L'esprit souterrain* (1929) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1932). Although Halpérine-Kaminsky's translation strategy is the subject of his study, these paratexts were not taken into account by Hemmings (1950).

In his preface to *L'esprit souterrain* (1929: xi), the translator replies to Gide's accusation of deception by referring to its title page inscription 'trans-



lated and adapted' (my transl.), which he said to be in full accordance with the customs of that time. More essential to his defense is his argument that back then, the French readers were not yet ready for an unpolished translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, which he illustrates by quoting from Vogüé's *Le roman russe*. He argues that it was not only desirable to adapt Dostoevsky to the French taste, but even necessary in order to give Dostoevsky's last novel a chance on the French book market:

As a matter of fact, it is thanks to our adaptation that this masterpiece – made, let's say, less 'abundant' – has become a classic in the eyes of the public and that the critics and Mr. André Gide have been given the opportunity to get to know what was most significant in Dostoevsky's works [...]. (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1929: xiii; my translation)

In 1888, Halpérine-Kaminsky was indeed convinced that the fashion for Russian literature was superficial and fragile: he predicted that Dostoevsky would only really be understood 'when the rising nervousness of our century will have reached its climax' (my transl.; Halpérine-Kaminsky 1888: 629). In his 1932 preface to *Les frères Karamazov*, Halpérine-Kaminsky once again asserted that a source-text oriented translation 'would have boiled down to keeping the French readers away from *The Brothers Karamazov* for many years' (1932: 13; my translation). This time, he based his argument not only on the state of mind of the readership, but also on the incompleteness of the original novel: because the planned sequel was never written, the true meaning of many episodes remains hidden from the reader – which hence were eliminated 'in the interest of the brilliant Russian writer' (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1932: 14; my translation).

To conclude, Halpérine-Kaminsky (1932: 13–14) elaborates on his motives to provide an invented closed ending to Dostoevsky's novel. In so doing, he did not betray the author, but, on the contrary, acted in good faith, for 'it still is Dostoevsky who speaks, but he does so through the free interpretation of his French interpreters'. Implicitly placing himself in the tradition of the *belles infidèles*, the translator maintains that the added chapters were not really invented, because they were inspired by so-called 'precise indications of the author disseminated throughout the novel itself and his unpublished private correspondence' (my transl.).

To put in the narrative terms proposed by Baker (2006: 168), the self-defense by Halpérine-Kaminsky is not so much based on 'fidelity' or 'the logic of reasons', which involves establishing whether relevant facts have been omitted or distorted, but rather on 'the logic of good reasons', which relates specifically to values – in this case, 'the good faith' and the intention to successfully introduce Dostoevsky's latest novel to the French readership.

### **5. Providing a counter-narrative: the retranslation by Bienstock and Torquet**

Half a decade before Gide had vented his criticism, in 1906, Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice's version of *The Brothers Karamazov* was challenged by the appearance of a retranslation by Jewish-Russian emigre Jean-Vladimir



Bienstock (1868–1933), who also had been assisted by a symbolist poet, in this case Charles Torquet (1860–1918). The marketing strategy of the publishing house Fasquelle consisted in presenting the retranslation *Les frères Karamazov* (1906) as ‘a full edition in one volume’ (my translation). A comparison with the corresponding source text confirms that the translation by Bienstock and Torquet is indeed macrostructurally more source-text-oriented than the preceding translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky – if only because the order of chapters was maintained, the thematic chapter titles were rendered into French, and no plot twists were added – but the claim of completeness is certainly misleading.

Just like in the narrative provided by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, in the retranslated version by Bienstock and Torquet, no trace of Dostoevsky’s preface can be found. Their overall translation strategy was clearly targeted at the size of the original novel: virtually every original sentence was substantially abbreviated, on many occasions entire paragraphs of the source text were cut out, and the following chapters were entirely omitted: Chapter II ‘Children’ and Chapter III ‘A schoolboy’ from the tenth book; Chapter III ‘A little devil’ from the eleventh book; and Chapter VIII ‘Treatise on Smerdiakov’ from the twelfth book. Some small text pieces from these deleted chapters, which seem of little importance to the main storyline, were integrated into chapters that were not omitted. The lack of concern about adequacy is also apparent in the translation of the numbering of the books of which the novel consists: whereas Dostoevsky had opted to number the books regardless of the boundaries between the different book volumes, in *Les frères Karamazov* (1906) the numbering of the books in every volume starts from I.

Although macro-structurally more source-text-oriented than the preceding translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, neither did Bienstock and Torquet’s translation *Les frères Karamazov* (1906) escape the criticism of André Gide. In his 1911 article in *Le Figaro*, he devoted the following words to it:

It offered the great advantage of presenting, in a tighter volume, the general economy of the book; that is to say, it restored in their place the parts that the early translators had eliminated. But, by a systematic condensation, [...] they stripped the dialogues of their pathetic stammering and quivering, they skipped a third of the sentences, often whole paragraphs, and often the most significant ones. The result is crisp, abrupt, shadowless, like a zinc engraving or, even better said, a line drawing based on a deeply layered portrait by Rembrandt. It is hence a true virtue of this book to remain, despite so much degradation, admirable! (Gide 1923: 63; my translation)

Remarkably enough, in the wake of Gide’s criticism, Halpérine-Kaminsky, despite the liberties he allowed for himself when translating Dostoevsky, could not hold back from making a contribution to the discredit of the counter-narrative by Bienstock and Torquet:

I refer the reader to the competent opinion of André Gide himself [...] to get an idea about the betrayal of this ‘complete translation’. And M. Gide is obviously unaware of the full extent of its monstrosity, given his impossibility to compare it with the source text (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1929: xiii; my translation)



## 6. A micro-textual comparison of two contradicting narratives

If we follow Halpérine-Kaminsky's lead, and take a closer look at the micro-textual translation choices made by Bienstock and Torquet, in order to compare them with those of their predecessors, we get a more nuanced picture of their retranslation strategy. Without aiming for exhaustiveness, we here focus on the ways in which they deal with Russian *couleur locale* and multilingualism. The below summary and examples are based on the research presented in Boulogne (2011: 399–719).

### 6.1. (Re)translating the *couleur locale*

The Russian *couleur locale* is constructed in *The Brothers Karamazov* through the use of toponyms, proper names, realia, ways of address and literary intertextuality. Roughly speaking, the translator has the choice between various degrees of exoticization or naturalization.

Russian **toponyms**, which we use as an umbrella term for place names, street names and the like, are systematically rendered by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice by means of transcription, creating an exoticizing effect. Bienstock and Torquet, in contrast, only exceptionally use simple transcription to render Russian toponyms. They tend to prefer simple omission, but also other naturalizing processes were put to use. E.g., the bridge 'НОВЫЙ Каменный мост' (the New Stone Bridge) was rendered as the familiar sounding 'Pont-Neuf' (Dostoïevski 1906: 53), which is a clear case of naturalization.

In the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, almost all **person names**, including the derived variants and the speaking names, have simply ended up in transcribed form. Bienstock and Torquet, when writing *Les frères Karamazov* (1906), took a less exoticizing approach. In most cases they also use transcription. In some cases, for the sake of accessibility, a footnote was added. E.g., the commentary 'Diminutif d'Alexei' was added in a footnote to explain 'Aliocha' (Dostoïevski 1906: 10). Also a limited number of speaking names was also clarified in such a way. E.g., 'Smerdiatschaïa' was explained in a footnote as 'La puante' (idem, 63). In order to keep the gap between the source culture and the reader bridgeable, other measures, too, were taken. The variety of names was reduced by displaying either the default name of a character, or by simply deleting the name in question. Thus the affective name 'Илюшечка' (Ilyushechka) was reduced to 'Iljucha' (idem, 434), and the surname 'Верховцева' (Verkhovtseva) was simply left out (idem, 441). In some cases, a character, called in the source text by his name, was referred in the retranslation to by his occupation. In a similar way, 'Степанида Ильинишна Бедрягина' (Stepanida Ilinishna Bedryagina) became 'une femme de marchand' (the woman of a merchant; idem, 31). It is also striking that Bienstock and Torquet have systematically replaced the feminine variants of the surnames (ending on -a) by the masculine ones (ending on a consonant). The reader hence comes across 'une demoisele Mikaïlev' (a young lady Mikaïlev; *ibid.* 361). To conclude, numerous first



names were replaced by French equivalents: 'Марья' (Mar'ya), 'Юлия' (Yuliya), 'Иосиф' (Yosif), 'Лиза' (Liza), 'Андрей' (Andrey), 'Ипполит' (Ippolit) and 'Михаил' (Mikhail) were translated as, respectively, 'Marie' (307), 'Julie' (122), 'Joseph' (38), 'Lise' (33), 'André' (276), 'Hippolyte' (447) and 'Michel' (197).

Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice use a multitude of processes for translating typical Russian **forms of address**. Already in earlier translation *L'esprit souterrain* (97, 109, 134), they had introduced the French reader to ways of address as 'ljuouboushka', 'barine', and 'moujik', by which they had rendered the respective words 'любушка' (sweetheart), 'барин' (gentleman) and 'мужик' (farmer, fellow). In *Les frères Karamazov* (Dostoïevsky 1888), most ways of address were rendered with a calque, which also can produce an alienating effect. Bienstock and Torquet, on the other hand, preferred to translate the ways of address in naturalizing ways. For example, 'брат' (brother) and 'голубчик' (literally 'pigeon', to address a male person) were translated as 'mon garçon' and 'mon cher' (Dostoïevski 1906: 83, 234). Many forms of address were simply omitted, which resulted in functional shifts. E. g., the character Svidrigaylov makes excessive use, in a sarcastic way, of the outdated polite form '-c'. In the translation by Bienstock and Torquet these subtle addresses were simply left out (Dostoïevski 1906: 149).

When translating the Russian **realia** in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice have maximally reproduced the *colour local*, by opting for transcription. Words like 'cafetan', 'izba' and 'dvornik', which become understandable in the context, are presented to the reader without clarifying information. Also the Russian unit of length 'аршин' (arshin) ended up in *Les frères Karamazov* (Dostoïevsky 1888 I: 258) as 'archine'. Particularly striking is the extent to which the epilogue was larded with realia, such as 'izba', 'vodka' and 'moujik'. Clearly, Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice abundantly used these words to reinforce the impression that even the chapters of their own invention were an inalienable part of an original Russian work. Besides, not only when realia were at stake, these translators showed themselves committed to lexical exoticization. They even used the transcribed word 'tchinovniks' (Dostoïevsky 1888 II: 182), just meaning 'functionaries'. Bienstock and Torquet, in contrast, only exceptionally transcribed Russian realia. Among the few realia they chose to maintain, we find words like 'izba' (152) and 'kvass' (81) and 'icôns'. In some cases, they replaced Russian realia by other, more widely known Russian realia: 'тарантас' (tarantas, four-wheeled carriage) was rendered as 'troika' (idem, 246) and 'грош' (grosh) as 'kopek' (276). However, in most cases they neutralized the *couleur locale*. E. g., 'изба' (izba, tree-trunk peasant hut), is sometimes translated as 'chaumière' (idem, 256) or 'cahute' (367), the Russian Orthodox calendar of saints 'Четги-Минеи' as 'Martyrologue' (ibid. 26), 'водка' (vodka) as 'eau de vie' (235) and 'юродивый' (a fool to whom prophetic gifts are attributed) as 'fou' (130). In other cases, Bienstock and Torquet again opted for omission. E. g., the garment 'поддѣвка' (poddjovka, kind of long, fitted men's coat) was left out (idem, 192).

Regarding the reproduction of the *couleur locale*, it should also be noted that Bienstock and Torquet, unlike their predecessors Halpérine-Kaminsky



and Morice, largely have erased the **literary intertextuality** that can be found in *Brothers Karamazov*: explicit references to Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Griboyedov, Tyutchev and to the genre *bylina* were left out (Dostoïevski 1906: 51, 83, 89, 148, 167, 274).

Although the above findings are not the fruit of an exhaustive comparison of the source text with the first French translations, it suffices to conclude that whereas the *couleur locale* was largely neutralized by the retranslators Bienstock and Torquet, their predecessors Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, were much more concerned about the reproduction of *the couleur locale*, even to the extent of exotization. This observation is all the more interesting, since on a macro-structural level, we have analyzed their translation as extremely naturalizing, in the sense that they even had adapted the original narrative to their projection of the French taste. The historical context in which *Les frères Karamazov* (Dostoïevsky 1888) came into being, offers an explanation why it was coated with a layer of Russian varnish. From the mid-1880s, Paris was under the spell of a generalized Russian literary fashion. The Russian origin of a work was therefore found to be highly relevant, and had to be emphasized. In 1906, when the retranslation by Bienstock and Torquet was published, however, the Russian hype had already blown over.

## 6.2. (Re)translating multilingualism

One of the most striking formal features of *The Brothers Karamazov* is its dizzying variation in language use, also in a literal sense: the speech of many a character is larded with short words and phrases in other languages than Russian. These hundreds of foreign-language units can be considered concrete examples of Dostoevsky's 'polyphonic' writing style. His Polish characters, for instance, are walking caricatures, distorting Russian language and now a then falling back on their mother tongue. However, the novel also features instances of French, German and Latin language use, which fulfill a variety of literary functions (Boulogne 2012).

Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice have partly reproduced the novel's original multilingualism. They even maintained a number of Polish words and phrases, albeit sometimes with small modifications. For instance, the Polish word 'panowie' (gentlemen) was rewritten as 'panove', which in a footnote was explained as 'the plural of *pane*' (my trans.; Dostoïevsky 1888 II: 47). On many occasions, the foreign language units were translated into French words in italics, subtly suggesting their non-Russian origin. E.g.: '*C'est à ne pas mettre un chien dehors...*' (Dostoïevsky 1888 II: 200). Bienstock and Torquet, on the other hand, neutralized Dostoevsky's multilingualism almost to the full extent. As earlier described, they have deleted numerous sentences from the source text, including legion original foreign language units. The remaining ones, they mostly translated without regard for their non-Russian origin, into standard-French. Only by way of exception, the foreign language was preserved: when the intellectual Ivan says 'хочешь qui pro quo, то пусть так и будет' (you want qui pro quo, so be it), this is rendered as 'Un quiproquo, si tu veux' (Dostoïevski 1906: 169). To compensate



for the loss of Polish language units integrated in a speech of broken Russian, Bienstock and Torquet on a couple occasions used compensation techniques. They added, for instance, the phrase '[il] dit en un russe mélangé de polonais' (he says in a Russian mixed with Polish; Dostoïevski 1906: 282). However, it is more than doubtful whether such compensation yields a high degree of pragmatic equivalence, or, otherwise said, whether it reproduces the comic effect of the source text. In any case, our analysis shows that also in regard to Dostoevsky's multilingualism is concerned, the narrative produced by retranslators Bienstock and Torquet blatantly contradicted the preceding version by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice.

## 7. Conclusion

On the basis of the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar 1978), according to which a translation strategy becomes more source-text-oriented when in the receiving culture the translated work gains prestige, and also on the basis of the Retranslation Hypothesis, according to which retranslations tend to be more source-text-oriented than first translations, we would have expected the retranslation *Les frères Karamazov* (1906) by Bienstock and Torquet to be more source-text-oriented than the preceding translation *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice. However, the analysis undertaken in this article does not confirm this expectation unambiguously: on the one hand, the structure and plotlines of *The Brothers Karamazov*, which had been radically adapted to the French taste by the first French translators, were retranslated with more concern about adequacy, notwithstanding numerous shortenings, but on the other, as a result of the retranslation strategy, important micro-textual features of the source text, such as Russian *couleur locale* and the use of multilingualism, were massively neutralized. These observations illustrate that it cannot be measured *in general terms* to what extent a given retranslation is more source-text-oriented than a preceding translation of the same source text – which undermines the analytical and predictive value of the Retranslation Hypothesis.

According to Berman (1990: 2), a retranslation with an exceptionally high degree of adequacy can be awarded a prestigious status. In this context, he speaks of 'a great translation'. Such a status would be virtually impossible to achieve for the first translation of a classic work, as translations tend to be less target-text-oriented than retranslations. We would not go that far to label *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice 'a great translation', but it is striking that this translation, too, has received an extraordinary high degree of prestige, notwithstanding its deviations from Dostoevsky's main plotline and other important macrostructural and micro-textual shifts. In France, although in 1906 and 1923 retranslations of *The Brothers Karamazov* by Bienstock and Torquet, respectively Henri Mongault and Marc Laval, had been made available, Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice's version was reprinted on a regular basis until the mid-1930s. Moreover, for many decades, *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) was used as an intermediate text for indirect translations into a variety of languages, not only in Western-Europe, but also in South-America (Boulogne 2015: 192–198).



Given the fact that the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice literally provides the reader with a different narrative than the source text, or than the retranslation by Bienstock and Torquet for that matter, it seems only natural to try to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying its success by drawing on Narrative Theory. As Baker (2006: 11) explains, '[one] of the effects of narrativity is that it normalizes the accounts it projects over a period of time, so that they come to be perceived as self-evident, benign, uncontestable and non-controversial'. Although she is referring to narratives in a different sense (as the stories we tell about the world we live in), it is clear that this analysis also applies to strictly literary narratives: doubtlessly, the success of *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice in France and abroad, made it look 'normal' that Dostoevsky's last novel ended with Alësha's reversed prison break and trial. The readership got used to this public narrative, and as a result, it was difficult for Dostoevsky's retranslators to replace it with a macro-structurally more source-text-oriented version, especially if it contradicted the already established narrative also on a micro-level. Moreover, Vogüé himself had publicly praised the translators Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, which in the eyes of the readership must have increased the general credibility of the storytellers. Taking into account the normalizing function of narratives – which is often overlooked by translation scholars – it seems reasonable to presume, by way of hypothesis, that the larger the extent to which a successful first translation provides the reader with a different narrative than the author, the more difficult it is to replace it by a retranslation. This insight helps explaining why as a counter-narrative, the retranslation in 1906 by Bienstock and Torquet, was unable to put an end to the national and international success of Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice's translation.

Central to narrative paradigm of Fischer (1985: 86) is the insight that we 'creatively read and evaluate the texts of life and literature'. Over time, despite the above-described normalizing function, dominant public narratives can become the object of mistrust. This happened to *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) in the long run: the various French retranslations of *The Brothers Karamazov* that have succeeded each other in the course of the twentieth century, including the retranslation by Bienstock and Torquet, have each contributed to pointing out material inconsistencies in the translation by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice with the source narrative. In the interwar-period, Halpérine-Kaminsky's 'logic of good reasons' was still convincing enough – judging from the reprints of his translation. However, today, this is clearly no longer the case. Here, also the so-called 'sleeping effect' (Baker 2006: 151) must be taken into account: the storyteller is quicker forgotten than his message, which means that with the passage of time, the importance of the credibility of the storyteller fades away. In other words, because the prestige of Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, partly bestowed upon them by Vogüé, diminished in the course of the twentieth century, their narrative became gradually more vulnerable, which eventually led to their rejection and replacement by macro-structurally more source-text-oriented counter-narratives.



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## ПОВТОРНЫЙ ПЕРЕВОД КАК (НЕ)УДАЧНЫЙ КОНТРАНАРРАТИВ: LES FRERES KARAMAZOV VS LES FRERES KARAMAZOV

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Опираясь на теорию нарратива, автор статьи анализирует второй перевод «Братьев Карамазовых» на французский язык как контрнарратив к первому французскому переводу романа. В середине 1880-х годов литературный критик Вогюэ выступил против знакомства франкофонной аудитории с сочинениями Достоевского, подчёркивая их несовместимость с французским вкусом. Авторы первого перевода (1888), Гальперин-Каминский и Морис, приняли во внимание опасения Вогюэ и изменили оригинальный нарратив путем выборочной апроприации и переосмысления образов героев. В ответ на обвинения в обезображивании романа Гальперин-Каминский сослался на логику достаточных оснований. В 1906 году читателю был представлен контрнарратив – перевод “Les frères Karatazov” авторства Бинстока и Торке. В повторном переводе оригинальное повествование было значительно сокращено. Микротекстуальный анализ показывает, что переводчики не передали ни местный культурный колорит, ни многоязычие оригинала, по большей части сохраненные в первом переводе, который был выполнен в пору моды на русскую литературу. В заключении невероятный успех первого французского перевода «Братьев Карамазовых» объясняется нормализующей функцией нарративов. При этом противодействующий контрнарратив и так называемый «эффект спящего» не позволили нарративу, созданному Гальпериным-Каминским и Морисом, пройти испытание временем.

**Ключевые слова:** Достоевский, гипотеза повторного перевода, теория нарратива, местный колорит, многоязычие



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