1 Introduction

Translation and interpreting are almost never the product of one individual only; they reflect the interventions of several agents and are the result of various and multiple causes. These “various hands, minds and hearts” (Simeoni 1998, 32) that are responsible for the final product might intervene directly into the process of the creation of translation, but more often they influence the production of the final output indirectly and/or invisibly. These other agents who are involved in the selection of source texts, and editing, reviewing and promoting translated texts, are, for example, commissioners of the translation or interpreting, source text or discourse authors, readers or receivers of interpreted discourse, publishers, editors, literary agents or patrons promoting the publication of the translation (and/or the dominant ideology or poetics) in the target society and culture. The interventions of these agents and their collaborations have ethical implications and may sometimes be in conflict with each other and with the traditional ethical principles in translation, such as loyalty. This chapter aims to provide an overview of how Translation Studies literature sheds light on the ethical issues that arise from literary translational practices where conflicts in collaboration with different agents occur.

Since translation as a collective performance is not unique to one text type, ethical issues arising from the dynamics of the collaboration between different actors can be found in various fields of translation. For example, Ji-Hae Kang’s analysis (2007) of the process of production of translated news stories on North Korea in the Korean edition of Newsweek reveals that the editors or “top checkers” are in fact in charge of the most significant omissions and naturalizations of the target text and should therefore be considered as most crucial in the production of a translated news story. Editorial interventions have also been studied in translations of English business articles (Bisiada 2018), while the influence of patrons, such as the EU institutions, was detected in the interpreted discourse of the interpreters working for the EU (Beaton 2007). Here we focus on agency and interaction in translation of literary texts only: literary translation was among the first fields where research was initiated on ethical issues arising from the interplay of different agents responsible for the production of the target text (see e.g. Hermans 1985).

The practices we are looking at, thus, are editorial and censorship practices, two potentially ethically conflicting collaborative enterprises which affect literary translation. The collaboration
and conflict between different agents in the production and publishing of a translation are often hidden: the actors involved in it tend to be invisible (Solum 2015). As there is often very little documentation of the practices in question, scholars we cite have resorted to a number of methods to unearth these practices: textual studies and comparisons, translators’ accounts, interviews and questionnaires with translators and other agents, ethnography and archival research. Much of this research does not address ethics directly, but ethical concerns can be discerned, especially in accounts of conflict situations. In addition to that, the practices we are studying here are often hidden and therefore engender an ethical problem in itself: hidden practices can more easily slip into a grey area not regulated by commonly agreed principles.

2 Historical trajectory

The fact that the final product of the transfer of any form of discourse from one language and culture to the other is not the result of the efforts and intentions of the translator or interpreter only, but may reflect the interests, agendas and interventions of other agents in the field, was first systematically discussed within the so-called manipulation school or Descriptive Translation Studies group, a group of scholars responsible for the publication of the seminal work *The Manipulation of Literature* (Hermans 1985). In this publication André Lefevere (1985, 215–243) drew attention to the fact that literature, and consequently also translations of literature, operate under different constraints, among them also that of patronage. In his subsequent analyses he further reiterated the fact that translations, besides being the translator’s interpretations of the source text, are created under the constraints of the ruling ideology and poetics, and may also reflect the interests of different patrons (Lefevere 1992). Patrons can be individuals (such as an absolute ruler like Louis XIV or other influential individuals like the Medici or Maecenas) or groups of individuals or institutions (e.g. a totalitarian state, a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers and the media) (15). They would typically exert their influence on the authors of rewritings through ideological pressure, and in return they would provide economic stability and grant their protégés a higher social status. For example, patrons would expect their protégés to uphold their patron’s norms, conventions and beliefs. And if the protégés act as expected, the patrons financially provide for them and also enable them to access a particular selected group of the society. Thus, if literary authors or translators want to acquire these benefits, they are expected to “work within the parameters set by their patrons” (18). However, the norms, conventions and beliefs of literary authors and translators might not completely overlap with those of their patrons, and this co-existence of different agendas can be seen as leading to ethical dilemmas.

André Lefevere defined patronage as “something like powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature” (Lefevere 1992, 14–15), which means that he saw patrons assuming a positive or a negative role in the production of literary works and translations. Some scholars argue that despite his initial openness to the potentially positive nature of patronage, Lefevere saw the role of patrons as predominantly a negative one, influencing the production of translations through censorship and ideological control and limiting the freedom of translators (Bai 2009). And indeed, André Lefevere’s work does draw attention to the cases where the influence of different constraints on the production of translations is more invisible (and hence problematic), and thus emphasizes the hidden changes in the target text that are made in accordance to the ideology of the patron and remain unknown to the recipients. This focus is intentional: André Lefevere argues that translation scholars have an ethical obligation to draw the attention of the public to such cases. In fact, he calls upon TS researchers to fulfill their ethical obligation and conduct research that will inform the general public of
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the manipulative shifts occurring in translation (Lefevere 1990, 27), and through their scholarly work ensure that the public would not be “kept in the dark” (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990, 13).

For Lefevere, thus, the ethically important tasks were primarily Translation Studies scholars’ realm, not translators’; although ethical considerations are central to his thought, he did not focus explicitly on the ethics of translation production. In fact, this topic was not overwhelmingly present in the research of the scholars belonging to the Descriptive Translation Studies group. The issue of the ethical tensions occurring between different agents working in the field of translation and interpreting became more prominent in the work of some of the scholars belonging to the functional school in TS, in particular in the theoretical thought developed by Christiane Nord, who introduced the notion of loyalty as an interpersonal category (see also Chapter 5 “Functional translation theories and ethics” in this volume). Ethics was thus established as a practice of translators and their fellow agents.

More recently, a number of TS researchers that are presented more in detail later have been focusing on different stages in translation, such as the production, revision and editing processes, bearing in mind potential ethical conflicts that may occur when different agents with conflicting expectations and agendas interact with each other in the field of translation.

3 Core issues and topics

The core ethical topics in contemporary TS literary research are, first, issues related to censorship, and, second, to the role of other agents, such as authors, publishers, editors, revisers, copy editors, publishers’ agents, even printers in the translation process. The two overlap to some extent; we will here first deal with political censorship and then go on to explore the role of agents of translation in the publishing business.

3.1 Censorship

The term censorship in Translation Studies refers to the change or reformulation of the target text or to the suppression of potentially subversive parts of the text, or else to the prohibition of translation if it is considered subversive, dangerous or non-normative to the Establishment in the target culture. Censorship may be exercised before or during the process of translation or interpreting (this is called preventive or prior censorship) or after the translation has already been made (this is called post-censorship, negative, punitive or repressive censorship) (e.g. Merkle 2004; Tan 2019); it may be done by translators or interpreters themselves (this is called self-censorship) or by other agents involved in the production of translation (e.g. by editors, official censors, language revisers etc.) (see also Gambier 2002; Wolf 2002; Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009).

There is a considerable corpus of censorship research in TS, and much of it is implicitly or openly concerned with ethical issues. Totalitarian regimes have been an important topic for censorship studies in TS. There are book-length treatises which address the mechanisms of censorship in Franco’s Spain (see the TRACE [Traducciones Censuradas] project, Merino Alvarez and Fernández 2007), Salazar’s Portugal (e.g. Seruya and Lin Moniz 2008; Pięta 2018), Nazi Germany (e.g. Sturge 2004), Fascist Italy (e.g. Rundle and Sturge 2010), and in Socialist states (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009; Popa 2010; Pokorn 2012; Sherry 2015; Looby 2015; Schippel and Zwischenberger 2017; Pilid 2017; Kamovnikova 2019)). In addition, special issues of journals have been published on censorship (e.g. a special edition of TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction in 2010 (Merkle 2010) and of Perspectives in 2016 (McLaughlin and Muñoz Basols 2016)) and there are studies on individual aspects of censorship, such as censoring queer texts (Baer 2011). In all these works censorship is mainly seen as an ultimate breach of loyalty.
principle; that is of the tacit understanding that links in a trustful relationship the creators and producers of the target text and its receivers and the author of the source text (e.g. Cembali 2006; Merkle 2010; Pokorn 2012; Tymoczko 2009).

Since censorial practices involve the breach of loyalty principle, TS researchers predominantly view censorship as a negative phenomenon. Not all censorship research, however, deals with totalitarian or repressive regimes and their institutionalized practices, and “censoring” has different interpretations in different contexts. When it is a question of translations for children, the target society is generally more open to a kind of an adaptive censorship resulting in deliberate changes in the target text. For example, in numerous contemporary societies, elements of explicit cruelty are taken out of fairy tales by brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen; in the contemporary USA offensive terms for African and Native Americans are replaced by more neutral terms in Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; in Finland 19th-century patriotic and moralistic overtones have been subdued in children’s tales translated today, to name just a few. The acceptance of censorship in these cases stems from a belief that children should be encouraged to grow up into “model citizens” and that they should be spared, in line with the “protect and control” imperative, of anything that could harm or endanger their development into ideal citizens (see e.g. Stephens 1992; Knowles and Malmkjaer 1996; Oittinen 2006).

The question whether censorship is a negative phenomenon or a norm-governed activity becomes even more central in the case of self-censorship, since translators often internalize the dictates of their patrons, adopting the “servitude volontaire” (see Simeoni 1998) to the extent that their willingness to change the text in line with the dominant values and ideology becomes their second nature. Pokorn (2012, 152) argues, however, when analyzing different cases of Socialist translations, that even if we accept that Socialist translators may have internalized the norms of the Socialist society and consequently eliminated religious elements from the translated texts for children, their behaviour constitutes an ethical breach because their translation strategy was not in line with the expectations of the recipients of their translations, who were unaware of the ideological shifts in their translations. Here again, we notice the invisibility which is at the core of the ethical problem, with the readers not knowing on what premises the text was being translated. It is a particular area of interest for TS to study self-censorship of translators and the ethical dilemmas caused by this practice (e.g. Santaemilia 2008).

### 3.2 Multiple translatorship: publishers, editors, revisers, copy editors and publishers’ agents

Another core issue in contemporary TS research is connected to the ethical conflicts arising from collaboration in literary translation. Hanne Jansen and Anna Wegener (2013) term this collaboration “multiple translatorship” (modelled along Stillinger’s “multiple authorship” (1991)), covering “united labour” as well as “strife, division and divergent allegiances” (Jansen and Wegener 2013, 5), which may often result in ethical tensions between the different agents in translation. The term multiple translatorship refers not only to translators’ collaboration with each other, but to an “array of individuals contributing to the ‘birth’ of a translation” such as “literary agents, scouts, sales agents, editors, proof readers and graphic designers,” in addition to authors.

Publishers, editors, revisers or copy editors and publishers’ agents may assume the role of censors or edit the target text without the knowledge of the translator and thus breach the copyright owned by the translator. For example, Pokorn (2018) describes a case of reprints of translations of Johanna Spyri’s *Heidi* into Serbian and Slovene, where editors ideologically changed the text (in Serbian Socialist reprint the editor removed all religious references from the translation, while in the Slovene post–Socialist reprint the editor reintroduced the religious
elements back into the text) and attributed these changes to the translators despite the fact that these changes were made after the death of the translators. In another case, Anna Bogic (2011) analyzes the correspondence between the publisher Knopf and Howard Parshley, the translator of Simone de Beauvoir’s seminal text *Le Deuxième Sexe* into English. Her analysis shows that the translator had been wrongly criticized for years for over-simplifying Beauvoir’s text and that it was the publisher who wanted her philosophical text to be transformed into an easy-reading text for mainstream US readers. Yet another example is Alex Matson, whose translation from Finnish into English of Väinö Linna’s novel *The Unknown Soldier* was changed by the American publisher to such an extent that Matson refused to have his name in the published translation and never translated again (Robinson 2011, 42). The translator’s decision to dissociate himself from his translation was most probably a reaction to the fact that the publisher turned “a novel about war” into “a war novel,” changing the genre of the novel into pulp fiction in the process (Suominen 1999, 5–6). We can thus assume it was the decision of the publishers and not the translator to have a Finnish officer shoot one of his own soldiers in cold blood contrary to the original novel. The fact that the translator’s name is absent from the book has caused many a critical reader to presume that it is because of the poor quality of the translation, when in fact it seems the deficiencies may be attributable to the publisher. These three cases reveal that critics, readers and sometimes TS scholars as well too often assume that the changes in the target text are the result of the translator’s free choices, not taking into account the collaborative nature of published literary translations.

### 3.3 The influence of the source-text authors

Authors of the source texts, obviously, form one of the first groups whose work is intertwined with that of translators – the ultimate loyalty relation, mentioned earlier, comes to the fore here. The (presumably) fond and assimilating relation of a translator to his (her) author, as expressed by the Earl of Roscommon (Venuti 2008, 238), may give way to or be replaced with a much more mundane or even conflicting stance. Martin Ringmar (2009) reports on conflicts between the Icelandic author Halldór Kiljan Laxness and his translators. The Swedish translator was blamed by Laxness for the “flop” of his novel *Salka Valka* in the rest of Scandinavia, while the German translator was dismayed because despite years of sacrifice in order to promote Laxness’s work, Laxness did not trust him (262, 266). Discussing the case, Ringmar deals with issues such as the authors’ control over their work, the difficult issue of translation criticism and the sensitive dealings between the parties concerned.

Laxness is an example of an author who expressed his vexation in no uncertain terms. Not always are author-translator relations so acrimonious, even if there clearly is controversy in the interpretation of the literary work. Discussions between authors and translators may adopt a more conciliatory or even friendly stand, trying to avoid conflicts and steer clear of difficult or sensitive issues. Such is the case of Selma Lagerlöf and her American translator Velma Swanston Howard (Sundmark 2013): the author’s interventions are most often subtle and diplomatic; the translator, for her part, makes a point of representing Lagerlöf’s work as faithfully as possible (even if this entails “omissions and little changes in titles etc. . . . that all was meant for the best interests of all concerned”) (Swanston Howard to Selma Lagerlöf, letter cited in Sundmark 2013, 170).

Another tactic was adopted by Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk. Arzu Eker Roditakis (2017) reports on how the Turkish author, after having gained fame in the West, became involved in the production of the retranslation of his novel *The Black Book* into English. When the first English translation (in 1994, by the Turkish translator Güneli Gün) received unfavourable criticism from
the reviewers, Orhan Pamuk initiated the retranslation of the book by Maureen Freely in 2006. He ensured that the target text avoided complex sentence structures and used unmarked, standard English. He intervened with the translation to such an extent that Freely in her afterword to the translation described the whole process as “collaboration,” although the author was not officially stated as a co-translator of the text.

Authors are considered as having the right to intervene, but their ways of doing so may differ greatly; likewise, translators may either feel the need to defend themselves or at least think it is in their competence, not in that of the author, to judge the audience and reader responses, as well as the literary and linguistic quality of the target text.

The study of author-translator relations has recently benefited from the rise of the so-called genetic translation studies, where emphasis is on careful archival and textual study in order to shed light on the translation process. Charting collaboration throughout history of translation, the collection *Collaborative Translation* edited by Anthony Cordingley and Céline Frigau (2016) paves way to a new understanding and methodology for the study of these processes. In the collection, the article by Patrick Hersant (2016) provides a typology of different author-translator collaborations, including “closelaboration”; the Cuban author Guillermo Cabrera Infante’s term for his work with the translator Suzanne Jill Levine (see also Levine 1984).

### 3.4 Collaboration between translators: ghosting and/or supportive practices

Translators may have their idiosyncratic ways of dealing with the author and other agents in the field of publishing when defending their translation solutions and/or demanding their rights; similarly, they also have different ways of collaborating with each other. The processes include agreed and settled collaborative deals (which can be very affective experiences, Filippakopoulou 2008), or they may involve an imbalance in the cooperation, hidden agendas or exploitation of the more vulnerable, perhaps younger partners. Such is the case discussed by Arnaud Laygues (2007) in his PhD dissertation, which explored explicitly the translator’s ethics and an “ethics deficit” (déficit éthique) in translatorial practice and environment and the choices and responsibility of different agents involved (15).

The case in question (also published separately in Laygues 2001) focused on two translators, a newcomer to the field and a senior translator, working on the same novel. In this collaboration, everything seems to have gone wrong from the start: the division of labour, the accreditation of the translator and financial reimbursement. Many of the routine practices in translating were haphazard, the wording of the contracts was unclear or simply wrong, and the whole process evolved in a highly ad hoc manner. The younger colleague was in the dark on what was taking place and that she was being used as a “ghost” translator, that is, as someone who does the translation (in collaboration or on their own) for someone else who is named or presumed to be the sole translator of the work in question, while the “ghost” translator is not credited for the work done.

That “ghosting” is not an unknown phenomenon in the publishing industry in general was recently shown by a survey conducted by Kristina Solum (2015) in Norway. She found that a great number of translators had either “ghosted” (taking on work for a nominal translator without being credited for it) or used the work of other translators who helped them as “ghosts.” Contrary to Laygues’s case, Solum’s respondents, rather than feeling exploited, saw themselves as showing solidarity in helping out a translator colleague – but as ghosting is an unregulated and highly invisible practice, it is not without problems. Solum (2015, 28) makes an interesting
observation on the difference between the (perceived) invisibility of the translator, who is, however, usually duly acknowledged and credited, and the (total) invisibility of “ghosts,” whose existence may only become known through anonymous interview data.

### 3.5 Translators and/as revisers

In addition to translating, translators often multitask and perform several duties or carry out different jobs, such as those of critics, journalists, authors, teachers, researchers etc. They often work for publishers as scouts, editors or revisers, and in this role, influence the outcome of a publishing enterprise. Jeremy Munday (2013) presents a detailed study of translation drafts of a translator-reviser. The target text was so much changed in the process that it ended up under the name of the reviser as a new translation (retranslation). This example witnesses to the fact that the line between revising and retranslating is often not very clear; this is not the only case where a reviser has started revising and ended up with a text that is so different on so many accounts – lexis, syntax and cohesive devices, for example – from the previous translation that it makes sense to attribute it to the reviser and not to the original translator (Munday 132; see also Paloposki and Koskinen 2010).

Sometimes the term “retranslation” is used for sugarcoating an ethically extremely problematic practice of plagiarism. Sahin, Duman and Gürses (2015) describe such a practice in the field of literary translation by looking at 40 Turkish translations of classical books that were distributed by a Turkish national newspaper as a part of their promotional campaign. Although the books were presented as retranslations, the analysis revealed that these publications, in fact, were in large part just reprints, plagiarizing existing translations without crediting them. Sahin et al. emphasize the ethical dimensions of such a practice and argue that these plagiaristic forms of retranslation not only violate translators’ copyrights and blur the translator’s voice in translation, but also produce defective cultural artifacts and negatively impact the target culture in general. Xu and Tian (2017) draw attention to the fact that also pseudo-originals, i.e. the translations that are presented or accepted as original works in the target culture, also involve partial or complete plagiarism of a text by a predecessor or a contemporary from another language-culture (3).

Often the role of revisers, who may textually change translations before or after their publication, is not given to translators but to editors working at a publishing house (Solum 2018). Their invisibility, however, causes problems both for research and for the general public when studying or evaluating the translation. The paratextual and bibliographical attribution of revisions is far from clear: often revisions remain unmarked, and when they do appear, there are multiple terms for the practice of revising or editing, with no clear difference of meaning (Paloposki and Koskinen 2010; Koskinen 2018). Revising may also cause ethical dilemmas as to the first translators’ rights: who owns the translation? And to what extent can it be edited and/or “improved”?

There are cases where the networks and collaboration between different agents become even more entangled. Indirect translation is one case in which the mediating translation is not always acknowledged and thus becomes invisible (Ivaska and Paloposki 2018). There are also cases where the text production has involved several other anonymous agents: Lintao Qi (2016) describes the English translation of a classic Chinese text where an extra layer was added by the Latin translations of some sexually explicit passages. In addition to recognizing the contribution of an unknown Latin scholar involved in the process, the research process also uncovered the significance of the actual printer in including, deleting or rendering into Latin specific parts of the text (49–50). The text, thus, was a collaborative endeavour by several different agents, who remain anonymous and hidden.
4 New debates and emerging issues

More recently, new issues that have ethical implications have emerged through research. The financial dependence of the translator on the goodwill of the patron and its implications on textual choices have been acknowledged earlier (cf. Lefevere in section 2); now, studies are appearing on the concrete issues of pay and work conditions and “factory” production of translations in history and at present (see e.g. Milton 2004). Norbert Bachleitner (2013) discusses the German women translators’ role at the point where commercial publishing and translating emerged in the 18th century, offering work and pay for women who needed it for their sustenance. Translation was regarded as a “mechanical” activity, and metaphors such as translation machines were used about translators, who entered “translation factories” (175, 178). Susan Pickford (2012, 170) deals with the issue of the French 19th-century publishers’ and translators’ competition when trying to get the latest popular novels issued to the market as fast as possible, using the production methods later associated with conveyor belts and factory production: sub-contracting and the segmentation of tasks. In Finland, the 19th-century and early-20th-century publishers usually had the upper hand in negotiating fees and in handing out tasks (Paloposki 2019). These kinds of cases are never straightforward: the work and the pay (even if meager) on one hand help people to scrape together their daily bread; on the other hand they contribute to establishing an unequal and one-sided employment relation. Present-day commercial concerns have become a focus of investigations of an increasing number of recent publications: the concern has been voiced that translating is only a profit-earning activity for publishers and that commercial voices seem to be winning in the field (see Jansen and Wegener 2013, 10). Decent working conditions, an adequate compensation and sufficient time for completing assignments are also likely to go under in the increasingly profit-driven translation market of today. The issue has been broached by for example Lawrence Venuti, who in the latest edition of his The Translator’s Invisibility (2008, 10) recaps and updates some of the information on the blight of literary translators who need to negotiate fees and compete for projects (see also Chapter 21 “Ethics in the translation industry” in this volume).

And last but not least, there is an increased interest in how gender issues interact with censorship (Herrero López et al. 2018; Yu 2015). The phenomenon of censorship (in particular that of self-censorship) has been re-evaluated: some scholars approach the practice of self-censorship as a form of norm-governed, and consequently as an expected, behaviour in a particular cultural and historical situation, downplaying thus the ethical implications.

5 Conclusion

As usual with ethics, there is no definitive “rule” or code that would tell us who is right and who is wrong (Koskinen 2000, 11). Often the negotiations on how to translate, circling around such issues as loyalty, have different shades to them, and concerned parties may entertain very different ideas and opinions on what kind of a translation serves best the interests – of the author, of the readers, of the patron or of the editors. Our main concern throughout the chapter has been to highlight issues where ethical problems may arise and to make them more visible to translation researchers, thus enabling scholars to “see from both sides” and judge their own positions.

The ethical dilemmas discussed in this chapter also concern our own understanding of our role as researchers and the potential ahistoricity with which we approach situations considered as ethically challenging. The current demand for authorial permission and acknowledgement practices when editing texts may prevent us from seeing the contingencies of past situations. It is difficult to disentangle phenomena such as plagiarizing from more benign and also less
problematic and problematized forms of collaboration; however, our understanding of the ethical facets of collaboration is widening as more research and evidence are being presented.

Although already some of the seminal texts in Translation Studies showed that the target texts are the result of many different and often conflicting voices, research that would specifically focus on ethical issues connected with the conflicting agendas of different agents responsible for the production of target texts or discourses is still rare in Translation Studies. A particular challenge for TS researchers in the future seems therefore to be not only to describe and reveal the different agendas, but also to explicitly and critically describe the ethical dimensions of this conflicting situation.

**Related topics in this volume**

Professional translator; literary translator; functional theories and ethics.

**References**


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Further reading


The volume collects a wealth of information on collaboration research. It includes a historical account on collaborative practices and sections for author-translator collaborations and for different environments where collaboration takes place (online, crowdsourcing etc.). Without explicitly researching ethics, it addresses various issues that have ethical implications.


Although not explicitly focusing on ethics, this volume nevertheless offers a many-faceted insight into the ethical challenges connected with collaborative translation.


This special issue of *TTR* offers a selection of articles on censorship to acquaint the reader with some particular and illustrative cases.