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translations: (re)shaping of literature and culture

Edited by Saliha Paker

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Translation as a Means of Planning and the Planning of Translation: A Theoretical Framework and an Exemplary Case*

Gideon Toury

Introduction

The last decade has been marked by the foregrounding of cultural concerns in the sciences of man. This has led to substantial changes in the way phenomena in the world of our experience are approached, which students of translation were among the first to applaud — and adopt. At the same time, it is not as if everything that has to do with culture has been brought to bear on the study of translation. One central notion which is sorely missing is that of planning.

Planning has always been a major force in culture and its dynamics. By contrast, it has remained peripheral in scholarly approaches to culture in general, as well as individual sectors thereof, in particular. One glaring exception is language, where planning gained some currency as an object of study back in the 1970s. Unfortunately, though, instead of developing into a lot more than just Language Planning, which it could easily have done, the ensuing

field of study dwindled into considerably less than even that: research very soon limited itself to codification again, i.e.,. mere corpus planning, to the neglect of status planning (or so-called language policy) and planning for planning's sake (see Karam 1974: 112ff; Cooper 1989: chapters 5-7).

It is my contention that we will soon be witnessing renewed interest in planning within a broader frame of reference. When this happens, there is no way that Translation Studies will be able to remain out of bounds: thinking in terms of planning is bound to affect the very way translating and translation(s) will be tackled and the kind of descriptions and explanations that will be deemed admissible. On the other hand, culturally-oriented conceptions of translation would surely not fail to serve as an example for the entire transition. After all, it cannot be disputed that, being norm-governed by its very nature, translation is as much a means of effecting planning as it is a paradigmatic case thereof. Rather than being involved in the planning of other domains alone, it is also amenable to planning in and for itself: from the very decision to translate and going all the way through to the establishment of individual linguistic replacements, whether they are taken from among the existing options of the target language or created anew, and hence the establishment of that which would be regarded as the appropriate relationships between individual replacements and their counterparts in the corresponding source text.

This is by no means the case now. Rather, in today's scholarly discussions of planning, to the extent that they are being held at all, translation is assigned very little room. One need only go over periodicals such as *Language Problems and Language Planning* to become aware of the almost total non-existence of translation as a topic, or over leading periodicals in Translation Studies to see that the socio-cultural notion of planning (in contradistinction to cognitive planning, which is assumed to take place in one's brain as one is engaging in translation) is hardly ever present.

True, when it comes to individual cases of planning, accounts can hardly do without mentioning recourse to translating, at least as a means of accumulating texts in a relatively cost-effective way. The

^{*} This is a shortened version of a paper read at the International Conference "translations: (re)shaping of literature and culture," Bogaziçi University, Istanbul (1996). In the time that has clapsed since that Conference, I have reworked my line of argumentation, which is here presented in an abbreviated form. See Toury (1999) for an expanded version of the theoretical portions.

role actually played by individual translations, or the translations of particular texts, in the evolution of a particular culture is also mentioned occasionally. Finally, practical recommendations for planners, too, in individual communities and with respect to individual languages, often allude to the use of translation. However, this is precisely where translation is normally left off: a mere mention, a recommendation 'to consider the possibility' — or, at most, a demonstration of potentials. As far as I know, translation has never been regarded in any systematic way as the planning activity it can be, and often has been.

The objective of the present paper is rather modest. My intention is to try and pave the way for an area of intersection between the interests of Translation Studies and Planning Studies. This will be done in two consecutive, and complementary steps. First, the field itself will be delineated in rather broad terms, from the notion of planning towards that of translation (Section 2) and back again (Section 3). Then, an exemplary case will be presented in some detail. The story will be narrated in such a way that it will constitute a demonstration of the workings of as many of the factors presented in the theoretical unfolding as possible. Narration will be cut in two. The first part (Section 4) will sketch the position of translation in the overall planning of a new cultural paradigm, whereas the other one (Section 5) will address the planning of translation itself as a carrier of change, under those circumstances.

1

CULTURE is here regarded through the prism of its being a structured repertoire of options which organizes social interaction and lends each move the significance it has in and for the group that entertains that culture. The notion of REPERTOIRE is most profitably perceived as the sum total of (limited) ways in which people in a given culture make use of pre-organized options (i.e., models), given their particular cultural field and their positions within it (Even-Zohar 1997a, b, c; Sheffy 1997). The word OPTIONS also implies that, at any given situation, CHOICES have to be made,

which are, moreover, strongly constrained. Membership in a collective entity and participation in its culture thus involve not only acquisition of the repertoire as such, but knowledge as well of the appropriateness/inappropriateness of whatever options are included in it under different circumstances.

If this is what culture and cultural behavior are taken to be, then PLANNING would consist in any act of (more or less deliberate) intervention in a current state of affairs within a social group, i.e., making decisions for others to follow, whether the impetus for intervening originates within the group itself or outside of it.

In newly established cultures, planning may be equated with transforming lists (i.e., inventories) of alternative modes of behavior into structured systems of codified options (i.e., repertoires). In institutionalized cultures, where repertoires already exist, planning would basically amount to an attempt to introduce new options, and/or get rid of old ones, and by so doing effecting CHANGES in an extant set. It would also involve ways of making the interfered with repertoire accessible to the culture so that it can be put to actual use. Attempts to prevent changes which others are trying to introduce also fall under planning, whether they succeed or fail. Either way, the ensuing struggle will have become a fact of the culture in question, thus effecting some change in it.

In each group, there is a small minority who act as *producers* on the level of the repertoire itself. Whether entrusted by the group with the task of doing so or whether self-appointed, it is mainly those persons who introduce new options, and hence act as AGENTS OF CHANGE. All the rest tend to be mere consumers of the repertoire: they are producers on the level of texts alone. Thus, even if their behavior seems unique (and every instance of behavior does have a certain uniqueness to it), on the level of repertoire it would be a realization of the existing options, which therefore perpetuates the repertoire and stabilizes the culture defined by it.

To the extent that it wishes to have success and cause some change of behavior among the 'silent majority', planning is in need of a power base. In fact, very often it is performed for the very sake

of attaining power rather than as a *bona fide* attempt to introduce 'desirable' changes. Consequently, planning is often intimately connected with *struggles for domination*, as is every attempt to prevent it, stop it, or change its course. It is DISGUISE TECHNIQUES which often act as safeguards from losing such a struggle, especially when power has not yet been won (see as well the grand hypothesis of Shavit [1989] concerning the entrance of a new model into a cultural system): risk seems smaller when the claim is made that there actually is very little new about what is being advocated, and especially when such a claim can be backed up by (necessarily selective, often so much as distorted) evidence. By contrast, when initial planning proves successful and some power has been achieved, further planning seems to become much smoother. It may also become freer of considerations other than the set goal itself and the ways to attain it.

Planning need not be done in one sweeping move, applied to all issues and cultural sectors at once. It can very well be realized in smaller-scale activities, performed in particular sectors and/or with respect to more or less defined issues. The fullest move imaginable would of course involve the *invention of a culture, or cultural sector*. While theoretically possible, this is normally interesting as a mental exercise only. Thus, even so-called 'invented languages' are not really total innovations. More significantly, those invented languages that manage to achieve a measure of success are bound to have relied rather heavily on existing repertoires (albeit existing *elsewhere*, of course), even if false arguments are used again in an attempt to lead the consumers astray. This way, it is also easier to establish a group that would adopt the 'invented' system as its language. (Compare the case of Esperanto with almost any other 'artificial' language throughout history!)

Nor need planning be fully linear: first setting goals, then devising methods for reaching them, and finally applying those methods in actual behavior. In fact, to the extent that planners wish to achieve more than momentary success and keep being in power, their activity will probably be spiral, involving *constant reassessments*; not only of the implementation but of the very methods, even

the goals themselves. Thus, success in culture planning is often a result of certain flexibility whereas rigidity may well lead to failure.

Finally, it is not at all necessary that every step in planning be made in a completely conscious fashion, let alone leave visible traces in the form of records. Of course, the existence of written documents, especially if they reflect decisions made within a (more or less) official context, renders the application of the term 'planning' less controversial: the intervention itself would have been made transparent that way, even if it was not really all that drastic. Thus, I am all in favor of some tolerance in the application of the notion of 'planning' within Cultural Studies. I believe it is germane as long as it is useful in helping us to understand (and hence to explain) cultural processes and their products.

Once any intervention with a cultural repertoire is regarded as a possible act of planning, translation emerges as a candidate *par excellence* for (re)viewing in these terms. Most important of all, translation activities not only can, but very often do cause noticeable changes in current states of cultural affairs, up to the repertoires themselves. Many of these changes are clearly not involuntary either. After all, the act of translation is purposeful in its very nature, a teleological activity where success (or failure) are key notions: success and failure in terms of the requirements of the *recipient* culture, that is, which is precisely where planning may be said to actually take place.

2

Cultures resort to translating as one possible way of filling in gaps in them — on a variety of levels. A void in a cultural sector may of course be more or less noticeable to the people-in-the-culture. Translation is not the only way of filling a void which has been noticed, however: a gap can also be filled with an alien, untranslated entity, especially in a multilingual group. A non-translational entity can also be produced, namely within the possibilities of the culture itself, and, finally, the gap can be left open, at least for the time being. The decision to turn to translation is not individual either.

Rather, it is always norm-governed, designed to fulfill certain needs of the recipient culture. The same holds for the way this decision is realized, and hence the make-up of the end-products along with the relations that would bind them up to their counterparts in the source culture and language.

In the simplest of cases, both deficiency and fill-in seem to consist in mere *textual entities*, each one of which is of course unique; it may be more or less in tune with prevailing norms and models, but in itself be a novelty. Now, a desire to introduce a text into a culture by way of translation, including the possible resolution to retranslate (rather than reprint an existing translation, submit it to revision, or simply forget all about it), always involves a series of (interconnected) decisions; and since it always entails some change of the receiving culture, such decisions can justifiably be taken to constitute planning activities. This is even more so when the possible implications of the introduction of the text in question into the receiving culture – especially the form it takes – is taken into consideration, thus influencing decision- making itself.

In more complex cases, not only individual texts may be introduced into a culture, but hitherto non-existing *models*, too — i.e., pre-organized options which can be used as instructions for future production. This is the case be they text-types, or models for the representation of reality, or for linking episodes in a story, even modes of language use. This reflects, of course, a much more radical, repertoremic sense of placing new options at the disposal of a culture, which is normally brought about by groups of texts rather than single instances of linguistic performance: either a number of texts that embody a recurring pattern carried over from a particular source culture or texts which have undergone similar treatment within the receiving culture itself, independently of the features their counterparts may have had in the contributing culture(s).

Of course, changes in the receiving culture beyond the mere presence of a text which hasn't been there before do not necessarily represent a production mishap. Rather, change is in the very nature of translation as a mode of cultural behavior, something which planners have always been aware of. Thus, while translation events

are (at least semiotically speaking) initiated by the prospective target culture and intended to cater for its needs, they are often designed to deviate from sanctioned patterns. A certain portion of these deviations can be associated with the felt need to retain invariant at least some features of the immediate source text, which has always been part of the very concept of translation, but there may well be other reasons.

Regardless of the reasons for deviation from target-culture conventionalized patterns, the obvious result is that it is not unusual for a translation to be *quite distinct from non-translational entities* and even advertise its foreignness, including the deviations (or potential novelties) themselves. Moreover, in many cultures, tolerance of anomalies has been greater in acts and products assumed to be translational than in non-translational behavior, which lends initial *legitimization* to the introduction of novelties by means of translation. In fact, very often, an amount of deviance from target-normality in 'assumed translations' (Toury 1995: 31-35; 1995a) is considered not only acceptable, or even justifiable, but actually preferable to complete conformity to models pertaining to the domestic repertoire, which opens a wide door for repertoremic changes.

The fact that deviations from sanctioned patterns occur and can be noticed by the people-in-the-culture, who may even like it that way, breeds an inherent possibility of *manipulating* those reactions; for instance, by producing deviations at will. This would bring translational activities even closer to our notion of planning. A striking example of manipulation is so-called *fictitious translations*: original texts which utilize features, associated (within the culture in question) with translations and presented – and often accepted – as products of genuine, text-induced acts of translation (Toury 1995: Excursus A). Indeed, there is hardly a case where the decision to pseudo-translate, and the way it was carried out, cannot be accounted for in terms of a more or less deliberate attempt to introduce new options into a culture while neutralizing many of the objections that might have arisen, had the same novelties been offered in a straightforward, non-disguised fashion. In many cases, attempts to

disguise novelties as translational importations have proved highly successful too.

Let us move to our historical story now and trace the manifestations of the notions presented in the previous two sections in an actual instance of socio-cultural behavior.

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Some two and a half centuries ago, in the Prussia of the 1750s, Jews set out to modernize their culture, adopting certain middle-European trends as their models. This move was all but a continuation of previous practices: not even with minor concessions to changing times. In actual fact, it was highly subversive; furthermore, its proponents were not unaware of its inherent subversiveness.

Thus, the element of change in this move was far from spontaneous: the current situation was pinpointed, a goal was set towards which work was to be directed, and ways of gradually attaining that goal were devised. While doing all that, pains were also taken to make the move seem much less revolutionary than it potentially was, so as not to enrage the traditional leadership, on the one hand, and not to estrange the masses, on the other. A struggle for domination was imminent, and any alternative to the existing paradigm would have had to use tactics of disguise, if it was ever to win the struggle.

At the beginning of this period of Haskalah (or Jewish Enlightenment), planning was in the hands of a rather limited, and easy to identify number of persons who formed a handful of small groups. To be sure, no one entrusted these persons and groups with the task of planning anything. Rather, they acted as self-appointed agents of change. And even though their modus operandi never fully coincided with that of nominated, or elected bodies, they did hold occasional meetings where decisions were made. They produced written documents as well, including manifestos, which make it possible to trace reassessments and even full-scale revisions of the initial program. They also entered into conflicts, including open debates with others - not only the traditional leadership of the Jewish community, but rivaling self-appointed groups as well that had slightly different

goals, or at least advocated different methods of achieving them. Of course, these conflicts should have been made an important part of the story, but I will focus on those groups to which history has given the upper hand.

The decisions made by the self-appointed institutions of the Haskalah referred to various levels. Some of them concerned the kind of cultural paradigm most suitable for attaining the goal of modernization 'mid-European style' - individual constituents as well as overall structure, corpus planning, if you wish, far beyond the linguistic code. Others concerned the ways this paradigm, and especially the new options it contained, would be propagated and disseminated; ideally - to the entire community, which is one thing they never did.

One important decision concerned the language(s) to be used for the written sectors of the new culture. The action to be taken here was far from obvious, nor would any decision have been all that easy to market, given the multi-lingual and multi-territorial nature of Jewish existence in the European parts of the Diaspora where, moreover, occasional changes had occurred. As to Hebrew, the only language Jews allegedly had in common, (a) it was not really all that common, and (b) it had largely been reserved for ritual purposes, i.e., precisely those cultural aspects the proponents of the Haskalah were trying to break away from.

Anyway, the initial decision - one that would soon be revised was rather vague. To complicate matters still, it was made in terms which were only partly positive. Thus, the use of either Hebrew or German was recommended, sometimes even both Hebrew and German, to be used not only by the same persons in different circumstances, but also side by side, in one publication, even on the same page, sometimes claiming to be so much as parallel versions of 'one' text. By contrast, the use of Yiddish - the Jewish language which might have made the easiest way out in the area where the Haskalah was born, had it not been tainted by its long-time association with cultural behavior now marked negative - was practically banned.

Other decisions concerned the text-types that were to be either fostered or suppressed: centralized or marginalized. In spite of the adoption of European, and especially German practices as models, here too, decisions were all but automatic. At the same time, they often represented extensions of decisions already made within the culture-in-planning itself as it was gradually evolving. For instance, the decision to start out with periodical publications – and rather small ones, at that – made it practically mandatory to make almost exclusive use of texts which were inherently (i.e., not accidentally) brief. This was one of several reasons why fables were given high preference in the first generations of the *Haskalah* literature, why epic poetry was relatively rare, and why drama was so slow to appear. Another reason was connected with the disguise mechanisms mentioned above: it was relatively easy to pretend there was very little new, and hence dangerous here, since older paradigms of the Jewish culture, in the Hebrew language as well, also included fables; in fact, all the way back to the Bible, to which we will soon return.

Once the question of text-types arose, there was no escape from dealing with a concomitant question; namely, where individual texts pertaining to the types to be fostered would come from. After all, there is no real existence to a model unless it is implemented in acts of socially-relevant behavior and embodied in their results. This question was of course most crucial with respect to the intended culture in the Hebrew language, where many of those text-types had had no previous realizations; a noticed gap which strengthens our claim that there was nothing 'spontaneous' here. At any rate, the proponents of the Hebrew Haskalah, including most of the self-appointed planners, saw it as their privilege and duty to personally take part in the creation of the culture by producing texts themselves, rather than leaving the implementation of general decisions to chance, or to other persons. However, none of them had any idea how such texts were to be composed in the Hebrew language.

The decision to solve many of the problems in this respect by recourse to translation should come as no surprise. Not only was here an elegant possibility of trying out one's hands and tools towards the establishment of textual models which did not yet exist, but translation also offered a rational use of time and other resources (as it is normally easier, quicker and cheaper to translate than com-

pose an original text), as well as a prospect of capitalizing on the status texts (or even the traditions underlying them) have had in other cultures, especially if that status was a prestigious one.

4

What we are finally getting to is the need to look more closely at translation itself in terms of planning. This is because decisions also had to be made as to the preferability of certain source cultures and languages, the choice of texts which would be submitted to translation, and, finally, the strategies themselves which would be applied to the alien texts in order to generate the envisaged Hebrew texts: in general (that is, as an overall conception of `translation') as well as for particular text-types and individual texts.

Needless to say, the more we go down the ladder of generality, the scantier the documentation gets. Thus, it is much easier to explain the decision to translate fables, even German fables, than the decision to translate fables by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, of all German writers, let alone particular texts of his (see Toury 1993); and accounting for the way any of these fables was actually tackled translationally is more complex still. The more so as, in the period under observation, very few translators cared to comment on their work, except for general introductions to translated books (see Cohen 1998), and critical reactions were hardly produced at all. If one wishes to get to the bottom of these decisions nonetheless, the only feasible way is to study their results, i.e., the translations themselves - on the assumption that they are indeed translations. The underlying assumption here, which is not devoid of problems, is that recurrent patterns on the surface level – especially the make-up of the texts and/or the relationships obtaining between pairs of translation + source textual items – reflect much deeper regularities which may be attributed to norm-governed behavior. (See Toury 1998b).

Having mentioned documentation, there is absolutely no need that a translation will always be presented and/or accepted as one. Planning institutions and individuals may on occasion prefer to generate texts by translation — and then present them as non-translated

entities (or sometimes the other way around). By the same token, they may decide to present as translations texts which have no counterparts in another culture and language. That is to say, within a cultural consciousness, the borderlines between translations and originals may well be blurred even if the activities themselves are differentiated. Precisely that was the case at the beginning of the *Haskalah* period.

To be sure, there is absolutely no need for translation that was performed in the past to have been performed the way it is performed today; and this is not because past translators were evolutionarily inferior, or failed to realize the 'true nature' of translation (which does not exist, of course). Rather, it is that translation itself is not only changeable (in principle), it actually undergoes constant changes (in practice). Consequently, it is not always easy to identify old translations as such, especially if their very identity as translations was concealed; e.g., as part of the blurring of the borderlines between translations and non-translations. In our case, it is often quite problematic to answer the question why, of several texts that came into being using exactly the same strategies, some were then presented and/or regarded as translations while others were not. There were no doubt more decisions involved here, made in an attempt to achieve certain goals, but what exactly they were remains to be studied.

Back to the story, using as a case-in-point the first periodical of Hebrew (pre-) Enlightenment, *Kohelet Mussar* (literally, 'Preacher of Morals') and the position of translation within it.

Of the two issues of Kohelet Mussar that managed to see the light of day, a whole one-eighth was devoted to a gradual unfolding of the bold argument that, whereas 'words of wisdom' were indeed untranslatable into Hebrew, that language could hardly be rivaled when it came to literary translation. By harping relentlessly on the ability of the (re)new(ed) language to do precisely that which held so many difficulties in store, the planners succeeded in creating the favorable climate so vital for any planning project. They realized that there was a need to first enhance the status of Hebrew as a vehicle for translations before codification and dissemination could start.

This solution, which would justifiably be characterized as ideological, was supplemented by another, very congruous move of far-reaching consequences: positing linguistic acceptability as a major constraint on translation, to the almost complete forfeiture of so-called 'translation adequacy.' This move contributed enormously to mitigating the problematics of translation into Hebrew; not of course in any 'objective' terms, but in the culture's own view. The threshold was simply lowered, if you wish. The planners also decided - not with no objections, to be sure - that the main yardstick for acceptability would be the Hebrew Bible, which had ceased to serve as a model for verbal behavior centuries before. An obsolete option was thus revived - among other things, on the basis of the centrality it enjoyed in dominant portions of the enveloping German culture, introduced into the very center of the new cultural paradigm, and given new functions, all through deliberate intervention involving a serious breach of dominant practices.

As a result of this series of decisions, Hebrew translation during the early *Haskalah* period, which was indeed basically literary, was a blend of primary activities on the generic, thematic and compositional planes, where innovations were not only allowed to penetrate into the heart of the system but actually sought, and secondary activities on the linguistic plane, which was highly resistant to foreign interference. Thus, whatever instances of linguistic interference there were – and there is always interference involved in translation – they were basically *in*voluntary, in marked contradistinction to interference on other levels.

A few words to that effect were said by the editors of *Kohelet Mussar* themselves, in an article about translation which preceded all attempts to actually do translation. However, most of the convincing was left to a sample translation which was performed along those lines, for anyone to check both aspects, if so wished: linguistic make-up – against the Bible and conformation to foreign models – against a text in another language which could be taken as its source.

The only thing was that the alien text which should have been called up was not an original at all. What the reader was actually presented with was a Hebrew translation of a German version of an

English text, Edward Young's The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality. This was of course no accident, but the result of another conscious decision - a decision which was in perfect line with the whole planning project we have been tracing. It was not even the case that the translator could not read English, or that the original was unavailable in Prussia. It is simply that in those years, a particular translation of Young's work, done by Johann Arnold Ebert, was situated at the very center of the German culture, which is precisely where models and texts were so eagerly sought. In addition, to the extent that the reader was seriously invited to compare the Hebrew text to its 'source', only a text in German could have served that purpose anyway - and even that, for a negligible minority only. However, this minority included many of the planners themselves, who were in fact the first to need persuasion as to the potentials of quasi-biblical Hebrew for modern literary translation, and through it, for a substantial part of the envisaged new culture. To be sure, the fact that the translation was mediated was never made explicit, but nobody could care any less anyway, given the period's norms. (For closer analysis of the translational decisions themselves, see Toury 1998a.)

Conclusion

Does all this amount to a plea for taking translation into consideration in acts of cultural planning? By no means. Not more than arguing that translation is often characterized by interference is a plea for embedding as many instances of interference as possible in future translations. By the same token, this was not a plea for more conscious planning of translation in the future either; neither in general nor in any culture in particular. Real-world behavior may of course take theoretical considerations as one of its points of departure. It may also try and learn a lesson from descriptive studies. However, theoretical and descriptive studies are not carried out for the sake of being applied and should not be taken to determine application in any way. The present paper was offered as a purely scholarly contribution. What planners will or will not do with it is up to them. As

becomes all planning activities, theirs will also be the responsibility for the transition from theory to application, as well as any success (or failure) thereof.

1995a "The Notion of 'Assumed Translation' An In-

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