

### Reference:

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What about a section on translation in that literary history volume?  
On literary competence and translation, literary history and descriptive translation studies<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Literary History and Interference

There is not one single literature which did not emerge through interference with a re-established literature; and no literature could manage without interference at one time or another during its history. It has been substantiated that interference is the rule rather than the exception, whether it is a major or a minor occurrence for a given literature. It is only when the invisible processes of interference are discovered that its overwhelming presence can be fully recognized and estimated. (Even-Zohar 1990: 59)

Translation is, by definition, one of the indirect channels of a usually invisible process of interference of other literary systems (Even-Zohar 1990: 57). Research carried out since the 1970s within the framework of (Descriptive) Translation Studies, under the influence of polysystem theory, is said to have taken us beyond the need to prove the historical importance of translation for the development of cultures, literatures and societies (Zurbach 2001: 93). However basic this remark seems to be for researchers of translation studies, it still appears to remain unacknowledged by some researchers of literary history.

What Even-Zohar calls "tendentiously nationalistic literary historiography" (Even-Zohar 1990: 57) is, according to José Lambert, bound to exclude: "literature in 'foreign languages,' translated literature, special types of traditional but isolated literature (dialect literature, literature of the provinces), oral traditions, other non-written literature (film, television, chanson), 'literary life' in the sense of Eikhenbaum, and 'reader's literature'." (Lambert 1991: 137).

Focusing on the invisibility of translation in literary systems, Susan Bassnett states: "Traditionally, literary history has marginalised the role played by translation in cultural history, and has tended to define periods of strong literary activity in a given culture, not by the number of translations produced, but by the number and aesthetic value of original texts." (Bassnett 1993/4: 171). Literary history is inclined to disregard the quantitative and qualitative historical importance of translation in a literary system.<sup>2</sup> Portuguese literary history is no exception.

This paper presents a few reasons why current projects of literary histories should also include translation and the role it plays in our literary systems. These considerations start from statements on literary histories and systems in general (see Even-Zohar, Lambert and Bassnett above) which are used as a base from which to inquire into the current Portuguese literary system. Following the path suggested by the epigraph above, we shall try to appraise the degree of interference of other cultures in the current Portuguese literary system. We shall do this by analysing figures for some processes of interference through translation, so far left invisible, partly due to data unavailability on current reading habits, such as the best-seller data presented below.

Interference is an already established fact within the framework of Translation Studies or Polysystem Theory; therefore, instead of summarising here certain well-known arguments in this regard, this paper will follow the traditional reasoning of national literary histories. It will inquire, in exclusive and restrictive terms, into the importance of translation for our current Portuguese literary system by analysing data on current readership and reading matter.

The three main ideas to be developed are the following:

- (1) translated literature is historically important and interferes with the literary competence of readers, writers and, therefore also with works of Portuguese literature. Translation is present in the nucleus of "domesticated domesticity" which literary history creates (Lopes, forthcoming);
- (2) to study the subsystem of literature translated into European Portuguese is to study the Portuguese literary polysystem. Once the interference of translated literature is demonstrated and its importance assessed, the relevance of studying translation follows;
- (3) like translation, literary histories (and the study of translation) feed into the societies that produce them.

### 2. Interference through Translated Literature: Readers, Writers, Works, and the Repertoire of Portuguese Literature

According to the one of the main influences in current research in (Descriptive) Translation Studies – Dynamic Functionalism or Polysystem Studies – to study a literary system defined as "the totality of activities involved with [it]" (Even-Zohar 1990: 54) means to consider: "[t]he role and function of literature, the rules of the game, the relations between religious, political, and other activities within culture and literary production – [since] all may be modelled in a given culture in relation to some other system." (Even-Zohar 1990: 55).

In order to define the literary system, Even-Zohar applies Jakobson's model of speech events to literary communication. He claims that to study the literary polysystem means to identify the network of relations between the producer and the consumer, the institution, the repertoire, the market and the product.

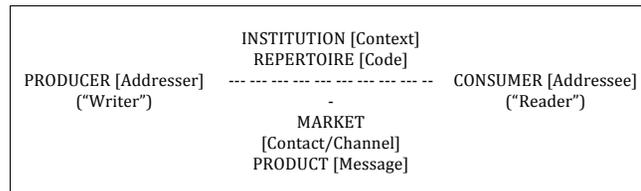


Figure 1: From Even-Zohar (1990: 31)

However, the reasoning that seems to preside over most current literary histories (not only over Portuguese ones) does not seem to comprise all these notions, nor the comprehensive definitions Even-Zohar puts forward for each of these constitutive factors of the network of communicative processes of the literary system. Since we intend to implore the reasoning behind literary histories by working within the presuppositions they seem to depart from, we shall somehow contract the system, so that the producer is only the writer, the product only the literary text, the receiver only the reader, and the repertoire an implicit poetics.

Even if we do not import the full definition of the literary system put forward by Even-Zohar; even if we try to reason in terms of "just the seemingly more visible level of the text or even of the model(s) behind it" (Even-Zohar 1990: 55), which polysystem theory finds inadequate; even if we take the literary system to include texts, writers, readers and literary codes; even if we take Portuguese literature to include works originally written in European Portuguese, by Portuguese writers, published in Portugal; and literature to mean a group of canonised works, written according to canonised models: we are still going to find interference through translation in the realm of canonised Portuguese literary works created by literary histories.

For the purpose of proving this last statement, we shall focus on the current historical importance of translated literature in the Portuguese literary system for the literary competence of readers and writers of Portuguese Literature, and consequently also for the works they write.

### 2.1. Current Readership: Repertoire vs. Literary Competence

Let us start from the notion of repertoire as put forward in Even-Zohar (1990), who suggests a comprehensive definition for it as "the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and use of any given product. These rules and materials are thus indispensable for any procedure of production and consumption." (Even-Zohar 1990: 39). He explains that this extensive definition of repertoire is imported from linguistics and, therefore, also defined in terms of: "a combination of 'grammar' and 'lexicon' of a given 'language'" (Even-Zohar 1990: 39). These three words are used in inverted commas because their import means a considerable expansion of their original definitions, which embrace the whole cognitive framework needed to function as agents of a literary system. So, there are literary repertoires for being a reader and for being a writer and for being a literary agent.

Let us consider a more restricted notion of repertoire, namely that of literary competence, also imported from linguistics, and defined by Jonathan Culler as the "internalized (...) grammar of

literature which [will] permit [the reader] to convert linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings" (Culler 1975: 114). Literary competence is a framework that is distinct from linguistic competence; it is abstracted from input provided by contact with literary works, and allows for access to the second order of signification of a literary work (Barthes 1957: 187).

However, even if we accept the more traditional and restricted notion of 'literary code' or of 'literary competence', it is still important to understand how an average reader acquires this competence. Where do readers of literature collect the basic references for their universe of discourse as readers of literary works (Lefevere 1992: 41)? What are the characteristics of the input that contributes to the development of such an implicit poetics or, in Jonathan Culler's words, such an "implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse" (Culler 1975: 114)? In other words, from what input do readers abstract the grammar, lexicon and communicative competence that enable them to read and enjoy canonised Portuguese literary works, which literary histories focus on?

### 2.2. The Literary Competence of Readers-Consumers

Ignoring for a moment the importance of the audiovisual media for the achievement of literary competence, and following one of Jonathan Culler's suggestions that it is built through reading (Culler 1975: 121), let us inquire into current readership by considering part of the reading matter from which the literary competence of the current average Portuguese reader may be abstracted, that is, books.

We shall firstly analyse figures for book titles published in Portugal between 1994 and 1999, as collected by the Portuguese Association of Publishers and Booksellers (APEL, Associação Portuguesa de Editores e Livradores). Secondly, we shall examine the data supplied by three Lisbon bookshops, i.e. the annual best-seller lists by Livraria Barata (1994-2001), by Bertrand Livradores (2001) and by FNAC (2001) – since it is possible to get a closer look at which books people read, by analysing which books they buy. Finally, to get an even closer look at readership, we would need further data, like those published, in 1997, in *Hábitos de Leitura* by Freitas *et al.* In 1988, among thirteen different book types, novels by foreign authors were the second most frequently read genre, only superseded by novels by national authors (Freitas *et al.* 1997: 272). Unfortunately, Freitas *et al.* do not apply the same questionnaire for the following years, which precludes a follow-up analysis along the same lines (the data regarding 1995, for example, only enable the conclusion that novels are the most popular and most widely-read genre).

#### 2.2.1. Book Publication Data

The percentages in the following charts correspond to the number of translated vs. non-translated titles published annually in Portugal, according to data provided by APEL. These figures include schoolbooks, which correspond to an average 19% of titles published in this time span, and considerably increase the percentage of Portuguese titles.

Years	Translated Titles	Non-Translated Titles
1994	38%	62%
1995	40%	60%
1996	36%	64%
1997	37%	63%
1998	35%	65%
1999	34%	66%
Average 1994-1999	37%	63%

**Figure 2: Percentage of Translated vs. Non-Translated Titles published 1994-1999 (APEL 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001)**

These figures should make us reconsider the probable relevance of translation for the literary competence of current readers. According to these publication data, the average percentage of translated titles published annually in Portugal corresponds to 37% of the total. They allow us to answer the question: "What are current readers likely to find on bookshop shelves?" The answer we were looking for is 37% translated titles. Moreover, these figures also represent a possible 37% chance that the literary competence of current average Portuguese readers is abstracted from translation.

### 2.2.2. Book Sales Data: Best-Seller Lists 1994-2001

Let us analyse the figures of best-seller lists for an approximately similar time span. After numerous contacts with several Lisbon bookshops, data were obtained from Livraria Barata (1994-2001), Bertrand Livresiros (2001) and FNAC (2001).

#### Livraria Barata

Livraria Barata has a weekly list of (initially six, and from 1996 onwards, nine) titles that sell most. These titles comprise mostly literary works, and mainly novels. These weekly lists were compiled in annual best-seller lists, which are here analysed in terms of the percentage of translated titles vs. non-translated titles in the total of best-sellers in the list.

Years / Bookshop	Translated Titles:	Non-Translated Titles:
1994 / Barata	50%	50%
1995 / Barata	50%	50%
1996 / Barata	67%	33%
1997 / Barata	56%	44%
1998 / Barata	44%	56%
1999 / Barata	56%	44%
2000 / Barata	67%	33%
2001 / Barata	78%	22%
Average Percentage:	59 %	41 %

**Figure 3: Percentages of Translated vs. Non-Translated Titles in Livraria Barata's Annual Best-Seller Lists (1994-2001)**

If these figures are taken globally, in the last eight years translation amounts to 59% of titles most sold in this central bookshop in Lisbon. This also means that from an initial choice carried out by editors and publishers, resulting in translated titles amounting to 37% of the total number of titles published, current readers tend to choose an even higher percentage of translated titles, amounting to a probable figure of 59%. These figures also represent a 59% chance that the literary competence of the average Portuguese reader is abstracted from translation.

#### Bertrand Livresiros

The best-seller list provided by the Lisbon bookshops of Bertrand Livresiros allows for a slightly different type of quantitative analysis of the role played by translation in current purchase preferences, from which probable reading preferences may be extrapolated. If we again consider the total number of titles most sold in 2001, in a total of twenty-four titles, thirteen are translated works. This means that translated titles represent a majority of 54% of titles sold by this Lisbon Bookshop in 2001.

	ST Author	TT Title
1	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal
2	Isabel Allende	O retrato a sépia
3	Miguel Sousa Tavares	Não te deixarei morrer, David Crockett
4	Albert Uderzo	Asterix e Latraviata
5	Laura Esquivel	Tão veloz como o desejo
6	Joanne Harris	Chocolate: um (doce) romance de sabores e afectos.
7	Ricardo Sá Fernandes	O crime de Camarate
8	Helen Fielding	O diário de Bridget Jones
9	Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa	Os evangelhos de 2001
10	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter e a Câmara dos Segredos
11	Manuel J. Antunes	A doença da saúde
12	J.R.R. Tolkien	O Senhor dos anéis: A Irmandade do anel. 1
13	Virgílio Ferreira	Aparição
14	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter e o Prisioneiro de Azkaban
15	Rodrigo Moita de Deus	Será que as mulheres ainda acreditam em príncipes encantados?...
16	Catherine Millet	A vida sexual de Catherine M.
17	Aníbal Cavaco Silva	Crónicas de uma crise anunciada
18	Cristina Caras Lindas	Sandálias de prata
19	Margarida Rebelo Pinto	Crónicas da Margarida
20	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter e o Cálice de Fogo
21	Nicholas Sparks	Uma promessa para toda a vida
22	Margarida Rebelo Pinto	Sei lá
23	Paulo Coelho	Palavras essenciais
24	Latifa	Face negada

**Figure 4: Bertrand Livresiros' 2001 Annual Best-Seller List (Translated Titles shaded)**

Any such list will allow for a different type of analysis, since this percentage of 54% of titles most sold will correspond to a different estimate of items sold, depending on the position such titles occupy in the list. If we look at list heads, and take them to include the top 25% of this list, they are the first six titles. And we find that in the first six positions only one title is by a Portuguese-language author; the remaining five are translations. This suggests that the titles that sell the highest number of books are translations. This presupposition may, in turn, lead us to hypothesise that the percentage of translated titles (54%) among the best-sellers may correspond to an even higher percentage of translated items in the total number of best-seller books sold. Since Bertrand Livresiros also provided the number of books sold by each title, we can put this hypothesis to test.

	Number of Titles	Percentage of Titles	Number of Books Sold	Percentage of Books Sold
Translated Texts	13	54%	73359	61%
Non-Translated Texts	11	46%	44403	39%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28956</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 5: Number of titles vs. number of items most sold by Bertrand Livresiros in 2001**

Let us now analyse the number of books sold per title, and particularly the number of translated books vs. the number of non-translated books. The number of translated books most sold amounts to 61% of the total. This allows for a reinterpretation of the figures we were formerly considering, namely the percentage of 54% of translated titles in the list. Consequently, even if the number of books sold by each title is not available, the analysis of list heads allows us to presume an even greater number of books sold by the category that represents the majority in the top 25% of each list. According to these results, there is a higher than 54% chance (actually 61% chance) that current average Portuguese readers may abstract their literary competence, and its implicit poetics, from the translated literary works they buy.

If we reassess the best-seller lists by Livraria Barata according to the above consideration, we realise that, out of a total of eight annual best-seller lists, four have only translations as top two titles, while the remaining four have a translation occupying the first position. Therefore, if we consider the number of items sold, instead of simply appraising the presence of titles in these best-seller lists, we may presume that - over the last eight years - in the global annual best-seller sales of Livraria Barata, translation is likely to amount to more than 59%.

#### FNAC

FNAC supplied the 52 weekly best-seller lists for 2001. Out of the initial 520 entries, one annual list with 95 best-seller titles was produced; of the 95 titles in that list, translations represent 55%. If we consider the same number of titles included in the Bertrand best-seller list and analyse its first twenty-four items, translations represent 67%, whereas titles by Portuguese-language authors amount to 33% (of which two Brazilian Portuguese titles by Jorge Amado, which might also be considered channels of interference). Again, translated titles are best represented among the top best-selling titles in this list.

Since no sales figures were provided for these titles, it is impossible to ascertain the number of books sold, and, therefore, impossible to estimate the percentage of translated books sold. However, if we again take a list of 24 titles and analyse those in the six list heads, they include a clear majority of translated titles, since only one title is by a Portuguese-language author. According to this list, it is most likely that translations represent more than 67% of the current reading matter.

	<i>ST Author</i>	<i>TT Title</i>
1	J. K. Rowling	Harry Potter e a pedra filosofal
2	Isabel Allende	Retrato a sépia
3	J. K. Rowling	Harry Potter e a câmara dos segredos
4	Joanne Harris	Chocolate
5	Miguel Sousa Tavares	Não te deixarei morrer David Crockett
6	Milan Kundera	A ignorância

**Figure 6: The Six List Heads of the 2001 annual best-seller titles by FNAC (Translated Titles shaded)**

If we compare the percentage of translated titles with Portuguese-language titles in the best-seller lists provided by these three bookshops, we arrive at a percentage of 59% translated titles. This, in turn, may represent an even higher percentage of translated items sold, given the analysis of list heads.

Bookshop	No. Titles in Best-Seller List	Years	TT	PT
FNAC	24	2001	67%	33%
FNAC	95	2001	55%	43%
Barata	9	1994-2001	59%	41%
Bertrand	24	2001	54%	46%
Average Percentage:			59%	41%

**Figure 7: Comparative Table (Annual Best-Seller lists by Livraria Barata, Bertrand Livresiros and FNAC)**

However, we must keep in mind that the number of books most sold does not necessarily coincide with books actually read. A book may be read by its owner, it may be used by other members belonging to the same household, it may be borrowed and lent several times and may, therefore, reach a higher number of readers; on the other hand, it may be bought, but not read at all; moreover, the number of titles sold does not necessarily reveal the most influential books for a given readership.

Furthermore, the sociological profile of buyers in these bookshops would have to be appraised, as it might have a considerable influence on purchase choices. These data would ideally be compared with similar ones emanating from other Portuguese bookshops. So far, no other information could be obtained in order to evaluate the representativeness of these data, as well as the quantitative significance translated titles have in current reading matter. Indeed, as José Lambert states in his article "In Quest of Literary World Maps", once we discard the "pre-Columbian world view"

provided by the normative and restrictive concept of national literature as created by literary histories, we begin charting unmapped territory and will sometimes face considerable problems in identifying the data necessary to (re)create the missing continents we mean to describe (Lambert 1991: 137).

Even if, for all the reasons mentioned above, the data used are not considered reliable enough, it is still possible to carry out a survey into reading habits, as well as into favourite and qualitatively most influential titles. Simple questions - What was your favourite novel as a teenager? Was it translated? Was it non-translated? Which is your current favourite literary work? - would add relevant information about the influence of translated texts on the current average readership.<sup>3</sup>

However, as with most sociological investigations, there is very often a difference between what people do and what people say they do. A questionnaire along such lines would probably result in data about the dominant attitude towards readings habits. The statement that one is a reader of translation, and not a reader of works originally written by Portuguese-language authors, implies a specific socio-semiotic value. Such an attitude is probably the consequence of, at least, two centuries of literary history re-writes that emphasise the genius of original works, while denigrating the product, process, function and agency of translation. The data thus elicited would very likely be skewed and favour non-translated works.

Considering the quantitative analysis carried out on the available data, the current historical importance of translated works for the literary competence of contemporary Portuguese readers becomes self-evident. One could cautiously hypothesise that a reading framework probably built, in its vast majority, by translated works will have consequences on the reception of literary works, including those originally written and published in Portuguese. To know, understand and explain the features of more than 59% of the total reading input cannot but be of great importance for literary history

### 2.3. The Literary Competence of Writers-Producers

The current influence of translated works can also be analysed in terms of the literary competence of Portuguese writers, and there are various ways in which translation may influence the producers of literary works. Firstly, since the producer is also a consumer, it is sensible to presume that translated works have had considerable consequences for the repertoire of any informed reader, and thus for writers, who are likely to be informed readers (see Fish 1970). Secondly, even if we consider a traditional definition of translation as the production of interlingually translated texts – a common assumption of literary histories – writers are far more in contact with translations than might be supposed. There are several examples of writers who are also translators. Such is the case of Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage (1765-1805), Filinto Elísio (1734-1819), António Feliciano de Castilho (1800-1875), Manuel Joaquim Pinheiro Chagas (1842-1895), José Maria Eça de Queiroz (1845-1900), or José Saramago (1922-), to name but a few. Translating is often a means of earning a living and a way of training writing skills, since the re-creation of foreign canonised works is instrumental in acquiring mastery over the literary use of linguistic features. Finally, some authors first access the market by publishing pseudo-translations (i.e. works originally written in Portuguese, but marketed as translations) because they do not manage to publish as writers of original works. Paratextual features similar to those of translated works are characteristic of such texts and descriptive comparative work is called for to assess how far these works mimic textual-linguistic choices prevalent in translated texts.

In all these cases, the influence of translation is definitely present, even if we merely want to focus on the literary competence of writers of the "domesticated domesticity" of so-called original works. The quantitative analysis presented above raises further questions, such as: What are the models writers import, adapt or recreate? What expectations do they construe of their readers' expectations?

### 2.4. The Message – Product

If translations make up the bulk of works from which the literary competence of current readership in Portugal is abstracted, it would be interesting to inquire into the probable influence this might have on the group of characteristics that constitute a (so-called) original literary work. Current research departing from the semiautomatic analysis of comparable corpora, within the framework of Corpus-Based Translation Studies, is one of the ways to inquire into this possible influence, in terms of textual-linguistic choices (see e.g. Laviosa-Braithwaite 1996). Research into paratextual norms (see e.g. Alvstad 2001) is another possibility of pursuing data on similarities between translated and non-translated literary works.

Therefore, even if we consider only the core of canonised Portuguese literary works created by current projects of literary history, translation is likely to be influential, and interference strongly felt. Moreover, as Even-Zohar pointed out, interference seems to be the rule, and the data analysis enables us to identify translation as a considerable occurrence for the current Portuguese literary system. All data obtained and analysed point to the probable figure of around 37% of translated texts published, and around 60% translated literary texts read in Portugal during the last eight years.

What tendencies and influences do these numbers represent? Which authors, literary modes, genres, and source languages do they stand for? How far does the current historical interference of translation go? What are the beginnings of its current profile? How did it fluctuate? Which factors have determined the variability of this influence? Given the figures already mentioned, the importance of translation for the creation of current literary competence (shared by readers and re-created by writers in literary works) seems to deserve our full attention, if we wish to describe the host of activities that contribute to the literary system. It becomes self-evident that current literary histories would greatly benefit from considering the answers to the above mentioned questions on the current influence and importance of translation.

### 3. Are Translations Facts of Target Cultures, or are Target Cultures Translated Facts?

These data can also be interpreted in terms of their consequences for the theoretical framework of Descriptive Translation Studies. Considering recent developments in Translation Studies, one cannot stress enough the importance, both of the concept of translational norms (Toury 1978, 1986, 1995)<sup>4</sup>, and of their study, in order to better understand and analyse literary polysystems. If we accept the statement by Toury (1995: 29) that "translations are facts of target cultures", then, to study them will mean to study facts of target cultures, which such national literary histories are expected to describe.

Since the end of the 1970s, one of the main developments for the study of translation has been the work of a group of researchers who, within the framework of polysystem theory, have studied translations as facts of target cultures. Instead of studying translation in a cultural and historical vacuum, they start from a Copernican re-definition of translation as: any text that one particular linguistic community accepts and identifies as a translation. Given this starting point, to study

translation means to describe and explain features of the presupposed equivalence between the source text and the target text. There is no *a priori* definition of equivalence, based on which a given text may (or may not) be considered a translation. Equivalence is a relational, historically variable concept, best defined as a translational relation, which results from a complex negotiation with the sociocultural context, the literary, historical, ideological framework within which a translator's activity is carried out.

The most influential concept that results from the idea of translation as the result of a negotiation with a given sociocultural context, is that of translational norms, which motivate/ constrain the variable content of functional equivalence. As a social activity, translation is governed by what a given community defines as acceptable translation process, product and function (Holmes 1988: 72). Norms are implicit codes of instructions followed by translators, and they become manifest through explicit comments on what translations are or (more usually) on what they should be, and also in the regular features characteristic of translation as product, process and function.

Translational norms have also been hypothesised and proven to correlate with the power and prestige relationship between the source and target cultures in different historical moments (Even-Zohar 1990; Toury 1995). Power and prestige relationships are, therefore, major factors to be taken into account in research, since the status of the source culture, author and text, as well as the status of the target culture, translator, text, readership, editor, etc. are variables of primary importance. Given this emphasis on the importance of context for the features of translation, the study of translation is the study of the context that motivates or conditions its characteristics. To study translation is to study the target literary system that literary histories are expected to describe.

Given the figures analysed above, to study translation as a product of negotiation with variables pertaining to the sociocultural context in which it is produced, also means, in such cases, to consider a repertoire built with considerable interference through translation. This calls for some reflection since even the reasoning presiding over the definition of 'sociocultural context' (in most works on Translation Theory) seems to fall prey to fallacious re-writes (such as most literary histories) which obliterate the relevance, for the repertoire and sociocultural context, of the very object they mean to tackle: translation. Translations are, indeed, facts of target cultures. However, in some cases, target cultures also seem to be, to a large extent, translated facts.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in such cases, to study translation is to study a considerable section of the target literary system and of the target sociocultural context.

#### 4. The Study of Translation is Another Fact of the Target Culture

Whether a society studies translation or not, and the way it is studied, the status of translators, translation activity, translated texts and of Translation Studies, also defines that very same society. As José Lambert deftly puts it: "(...) translation as a cultural phenomenon is inevitably a problem for societies and (...) the way in which societies tend to solve it (and to study/ not study it), consciously and unconsciously, teaches us how societies define and re-define themselves" (Lambert 1996: 11).

According to the data and analysis presented above, as in the terms put forward by Robyns (1994), the Portuguese culture, like other cultures, is a conglomerate of discursive practices that - marked by interference and also by translation as one of its indirect channels - configure a multicultural system. These data point towards a strong interference through translation, since 37% of books published during the last eight years were translated, and purchase preferences suggest a reading

matter probably constituted by more than 60% translated works. The actual profiling of this interference is still to be assessed by descriptive studies of translation into European Portuguese.

However, none of these facts of literary systems are dealt with in Portuguese literary histories, which continually disregard them, as the metadiscursive practice of literary history takes a defensive stance. Since multiculturalism is considered a negative value, a threat to the canon created by literary history, it must be either ignored or fought. Literary history, as an identity-constructing discursive practice, does not acknowledge the multiculturalism of current discursive practices because "if identity is constructed in opposition to the alien, interferences imply loss of autonomy and thereby loss of identity" (Robyns 1994: 406). In the words of Theo Hermans: "As a social practice, the study of translation, like translation itself, is always overdetermined" (Hermans 1996: 48). The power relations operating in literary systems deny the quantitatively impressive influence of translation in them; this fact alone should call for descriptive studies.

It is, at least, doubtful whether a contemporary project of literary history can afford to be only informed by a monologising definition of a literary system - without seriously considering translation, and without pondering the complex interaction of multiple voices, activities, participants, features, motivations and constraints. It is high time for the importance of translation in current literary systems to be acknowledged and described in contemporary literary histories, which also entails the recognition of the social relevance of research carried out by the discipline of Translation Studies.

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<sup>2</sup> A noticeable exception is *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, edited by Peter France and published in 2000.

<sup>3</sup> When this paper was presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Portuguese Association for Anglo-American Studies (Coimbra, 18-20 April 2002), around 40% - 50% of the Portuguese audience answered that their favourite teenager novel had been translated.

<sup>4</sup> For the concept of translational norms see also Even-Zohar (1990), Hermans (1991, 1993, 1995, 1996), Poltermann (1992), Chesterman (1993, 1997), Nord (1991), Baker (1998), Schäffner (1999), among others.

<sup>5</sup> As stated, this type of analysis has consequences, notably, for DTS in terms of the definition of sociocultural context; but also for Literary History and Theory in terms of the definitions of repertoire, literary competence and, consequently, even reader (see Rosa forthcoming).