



University of Antwerp
| TRICS | Translation, Interpreting
and Intercultural Studies



JAMES JOYCE IN TRANSLATION CENTRE

International Conference

Retranslation in Context VII

Concepts, Contexts, Prospects

Antwerp, 9-11 December 2026

Grauwzusters Convent, Lange Sint-Annastraat 7, 2000 Antwerpen

Call for Abstracts

Retranslations are typically understood as new translations of a text previously translated in the same target language and context (Gambier, 1994; Tahir Gürçağlar, 2009; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010), although this definition has been met with some criticism in more recent scholarship (Alevato do Amaral, 2019; Peeters & Van Poucke, 2023; Peeters, 2025). Since the 1990s, retranslations have gradually emerged as an object of study in their own right, within the broader field of Translation Studies. To date, however, retranslation has been investigated primarily within literary translation studies, particularly in relation to classics of world literature. By contrast, in areas such as popular literature and culture (crime fiction, science fiction, comic books, song translation, film adaptation), philosophy, history, religion, scientific translation, audiovisual translation, or legal translation, retranslation remains underexplored. Other subfields of Translation Studies have not yet discovered retranslation as a significant research focus. One thinks of translation process studies, experimental research, digital humanities approaches, or corpus-based translation studies investigating probabilistic translation universals. Moreover, the rise of generative AI introduces a new and pressing dimension to retranslation research. Disrupting retranslation processes and products, generative AI raises fundamental questions about the socio-cultural roles of retranslations, the textual and agential practices involved, and the conceptual frameworks through which retranslation has traditionally been theorised.

The field of what we now call Retranslation Studies initially developed around the widely contested 'retranslation hypothesis' (Chesterman, 2000, roughly based on Berman, 1990 and Bensimon, 1990; for criticisms, see Koskinen & Paloposki, 2003, 2004; Massardier-Kenney, 2015; Cadera, 2017; Peeters & Van Poucke, 2023; Peeters, 2025; among others). For a long time, research largely focused on confirming or refuting the claim that retranslations are 'closer' to the source text, or on demonstrating the hypothesis'

limitations. Overviews of case studies comparing retranslations with earlier translations can be found in Milton & Torres, 2003; Desmidt, 2009; Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010; Monti & Schnyder, 2011; Deane-Cox, 2014; Alvstad & Assis Rosa, 2015; and Peeters & Van Poucke, 2023. Despite sustained criticism and the absence of a clear definition of such ‘increased closeness’, a widely accepted alternative framework for analysing the relationships between retranslations, earlier translations, and their source texts has not emerged.

At the same time, ongoing debate has increasingly foregrounded the contextual complexity of retranslation as a sociocultural phenomenon unfolding across diverse target cultures and historical times. It has become clear that the presence of one or more retranslations in a given language – sometimes even dozens – cannot be adequately explained by the assumption that earlier translations have simply ‘aged’, proved ‘insufficient’, or were overly ‘target-oriented’. Accordingly, a substantial part of research has moved beyond purely text-centered analyses towards predominantly contextual methods, inspired by the cultural and personal turns in Translation Studies and (poly- or socio-)systemic perspectives on retranslation (Cadera, 2017; Berk Albachten & Tahir Gürçağlar, 2019; Gulyás, 2023). Today, most scholars agree that retranslation cannot be captured by a simplistic formula such as the retranslation hypothesis and the dichotomies it entails, but requires attention to the interplay of socio-political, ideological, institutional, historical, commercial and agential factors.

Building on the well-established tradition of “Retranslation in Context” conferences—Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, 2013, 2015; Ghent University, 2017; Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, 2019; Károli Gáspár University, Budapest, 2022; and Ege University, Izmir, 2024—we are delighted to invite proposals for 20-minute papers on any aspect or any ongoing project related to the multifarious phenomenon of retranslation. Although all topics and approaches will be considered, we particularly welcome proposals, either theoretical, methodological or in the shape of case studies, that side-step the deceptive simplicity of the retranslation hypothesis to interrogate the following concepts and research questions:

‘closeness’, historical change, and the relationship between source and target texts and contexts:

- Can, and if so, how can ‘closeness to the source text’ be reconceptualised, not as an allegedly objective measure of textual difference, but as what changes from translation to translation? How are such textual changes related to contextual changes, in given target contexts? How can that change be described? What role is played by socio-cultural factors, by political or religious ideology, by language ideology, by translational norms or conventions, by retranslators themselves, in how ‘closeness’ is defined in a given target culture, at a given time in history? To what extent is such evolving ‘closeness’ a matter of content (or meaning) and in how far is it a matter of form (language, or style)? How is it related to Toury’s (2012) concepts of adequacy and acceptability? Are ‘monolingual’ societies (societies with a single or dominant official language) different in this respect from ‘multilingual’ societies? Are there differences in this respect between central and peripheral languages or cultures? How do language policies and translation policies influence a given culture’s concept of ‘closeness’ in translation?
- How can the textual relationship between (a) retranslation(s), (an) existing translation(s), and the source text be analysed, outside of the idea of ‘closeness’ to the source text? What other concepts, or approaches are possible to describe and analyse that relationship? How can such a description include the part of non-retranslation (re-uses and overlaps) inherently present in retranslations?
- To what extent, and how are retranslations of multilingual / heterolingual / heteroglossic source texts different as compared to retranslations of monolingual source texts?

- What arguments do paratexts by publishers and retranslators include? How are these arguments related to concepts such as ‘closeness’, ‘faithfulness’, ‘novelness’, ‘ageing’, ‘refreshing’, or historical ‘improvement’? To what extent and in which terms do retranslators refer to existing translations? How do retranslation paratexts deal with ‘sensitive’ issues such as ethnicity, gender, decolonisation and eurocentrism? Is it possible to identify certain trends in ‘feminist’ or ‘postcolonial’ retranslation? Do readers’ online reviews use similar arguments as publishers, or retranslators? What concept of retranslation can be inferred from reader reviews? How can we study the ‘real’ readers’ response to retranslations? Does the use of new, multimodal and/or social media influence publishers’ paratextual strategies, and how does that compare to more ‘traditional’ paratexts such as introductions, blurbs, and retranslators’ notes?
- What methods can be used to write a history of retranslation? How can we consider both synchrony (the synchronous presence in the market of different translations in a given target culture) and diachrony (the succession of translations in that given target culture)? What should be included in such a history, and how? Is there one or are there more histories of retranslation, depending on target cultures? How are such histories of retranslation determined by academic cultures, traditions, and scholarly networks? Do these contribute, and if so, how do they contribute to the canonisation of given authors and works of literature, and/or given translators and their translations of those works?

major translations (*‘grandes traductions’*), ageing, and canonisation:

- How can the relationship between *‘grande traduction’* (Berman, 1990) and retranslation be conceptualised? Are ‘major translations’ (*grandes traductions*) always retranslations, or is there also evidence to the contrary? If so, how should we think about the concept of ‘major translations’?
- How precisely are ‘major translations’ related to the empirical and/or subjective ageing of translations? How can translational ageing be defined, and measured? Do all translations age, including ‘major translations’? Do they all age at the same pace? How is translational ageing related to target language evolution?
- How precisely are retranslations and ‘major translations’ related to the complex issue of canonisation? Which agents and which institutions decide which translation is a ‘major translation’, what factors influence that decision? Who decides what is retranslated and how is that decision related to canonisation? How is retranslation related to the canon of ‘World Literature’ (Damrosch, 2003; Apter, 2013) and how is it related to the canonisation of translations in the target culture? Does the existence of a canonical or ‘major translation’ inhibit retranslation activity, thus leading to ‘contextual’ non-retranslation?
- How successful is the marketing strategy by which a “new translation” is launched in the market when there is a canonical previous translation? Do readers prefer (canonical) translations by famous translators, or older translations in which they first read a given author, over an existing retranslation?
- How do such efforts of canonisation relate to retranslations’ paratexts, and ‘avant-texte’? And what role do paratexts play in the canonisation of given translations? To what extent and in which terms do retranslators refer to former translations, either in paratextual material (‘post-texte’) or in the notes, drafts, typescripts that precede (‘avant-texte’) the published retranslation? How do retranslators reflect on canonicity and how does that affect the genetic dossier of their retranslation? How can genetic criticism be applied to retranslations?

new issues, new prospects:

- How can we build a general theory of retranslation given the immense contextual diversity of the phenomenon? How is contextual variety related to textual variety in retranslations? Is there a transcultural mechanism that can explain how the phenomenon functions across different cultures, or different types of cultures?
- How do recent evolutions in the age of digital production and reproduction of translations influence retranslation practices, and the concepts we use to describe those practices? What is the influence of neural machine translation, generative AI, digital printing, and social media on agency in retranslation and on the nature of the phenomenon? How do these recent evolutions influence the relationship between contexts, paratexts, and texts?
- How can we include other genres than prose fiction (theatre, poetry, essay), other modes than written texts (audiovisual and trans-, inter- and multimedial translation), and other fields of translational activity than literature (intralingual translation, technical translation, legal translation, philosophy, historiography, journalism, song, dubbing, subtitling, audio-description, ...)? In what fields of cultural production is retranslation more or less present, and present in what way? What effects does this diversity of fields and practices have on the definitions and concepts that we use?
- To what extent are our definitions and concepts suited for retranslations in non-Western cultures?
- What are the roles played by ethnicity and/or gender in the decision process of what gets retranslated, and by whom? What theories can we use to conceptualise the roles of gender and ethnicity in retranslation processes and products?
- What could experimental research and/or process research into retranslation look like? How could we put digital humanities methods to good use? How can language technology, large language models or other types of AI be used to conduct research on retranslation? How could genetic criticism be applied in retranslation studies and what could we learn from that? What other methodologies could be used, for which scientific aims?

Keynote speakers

Invited keynote speakers include:

- Elin Svahn, Stockholm University
- Enrico Monti, Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse
- Robbert-Jan Henkes, radical retranslator

PhD student workshops and tutorials

We particularly welcome contributions from PhD students and early career scholars working on retranslation and are happy to announce that the conference program will include two workshops for PhD students and postdocs, as well as one-on-one feedback tutorials with dedicated members of the scientific committee.

Re-Joyce in retranslation

As the University of Antwerp's Department of Applied Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting Studies and TricS research group accommodate the [James Joyce in Translation Centre](#), we particularly welcome papers dedicated to retranslations of James Joyce's work.

Working language

The working language of the 'Retranslation in Context' conference series is English.

Proposals

Abstracts for proposals (max. 350 words), accompanied by a short bio-note (max. 200 words), should be addressed to RIC7@uantwerpen.be no later than **30 June 2026**.

Notification of acceptance will be given by **30 September 2026**. At that time, we shall also share practical information concerning registration, and travel and accommodation. The provisional conference program will be circulated by **31 October 2026**.

Publication

Selected papers from the conference will be included in an edited volume.

Conference fee

Please be informed that conference fees will apply, as follows:

- € 150,- for presenters;
- € 75,- for PhD students who present a paper and/or participate in the workshops and/or tutorials;
- € 75,- for those who wish to attend without presenting.

The conference fee covers goodie bag, coffee breaks, lunches, a reception on Wednesday 9 December and a *pot d'adieu* on Friday 11 December.

Conference dinner

The conference dinner will take place on Thursday 10 December. Further details will be communicated in due time.

Guided tour Museum Plantin–Moretus

Following the conference, on Saturday morning 12 December, we plan to organise a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage [Museum Plantin–Moretus](#) (Vrijdagmarkt 22, 2000 Antwerp), dedicated to Antwerp's most prominent printing company, founded in 1555.

Organising committee

Kris Peeters (chair)	University of Antwerp
Pieter Boulogne	KULeuven
Ine Van linthout	VUB Brussels
Piet Van Poucke	Ghent University

Local organising committee at UAntwerp

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Özlem Berk Albachten	University of Reading
Pieter Boulogne	KULeuven
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Zsuzsanna Csikai	University of Pécs
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Yves Gambier	University of Turku
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