

NEW TRENDS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

---

Vol. 5

# Retranslation through the Centuries

## Jules Verne in English

---

Kieran O'Driscoll

Peter Lang

## Foreword

This monograph examines the proposed causes of, and multiple influences on, a selection of renderings, from French into English, of the Jules Verne novel *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (*Around the World in Eighty Days*). Published in 1873 for the first time, this novel has been frequently retranslated into English over the last 133 years. This research is a diachronic investigation of the multiple interacting translation causes and influences which have produced differing, as well as similar, target texts.

The principal translation theorists whose ideas provide the methodological tools for this research are Toury (1995), who has specialized in Descriptive-Explanatory Translation Studies; Pym (1998), who has dealt with translation history and causes; Hermans (1997), who has written on translation in systems; and Brownlie (2001), who has researched multiple causation in Translation Studies. The monograph thus integrates, in an original manner, a number of methodologies in order to comprehensively explain translation outcomes. It also represents a contribution to the still under-researched translation history of Verne's *Extraordinary Journeys*. A corpus of target texts, from 1873 to 2004, is analysed in order to discover the translation strategies employed and their likely causes, using Pym's (1998) model of the four Aristotelian causes of social phenomena, as applied to translation explanation, and Toury's (1995) norms model. The research design is qualitative. Translators' biographical details have been studied to ascertain the agency of the translator. Similarly to Chapelle (2001), this book addresses the difficulties involved in uncovering biographical information on certain translators, and the considerations involved in selecting a suitable corpus of retranslated texts, and in carrying out qualitative sampling within each text. It provides, like Chapelle (*ibid.*), some understanding of the varying reasons for which it is decided to retranslate a canonical literary text, and contributes to arguments concerning translation universals.

This research also illustrates that the discovery of multiple causes is a complex enterprise, and that suggested causes are probabilistic. Nonetheless, individual translators, over and above all other causal influences, are posited to have had the most important input into the forms of ‘their’ target texts. Translation outcomes are found to be unpredictable and non-deterministic, while the Retranslation Hypothesis (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997) is shown to be excessively simplistic, in failing to reflect the true complexity of the retranslation process. It is suggested that the methodologies employed in this monograph could be used to perform similar studies of retranslation history and of multiple sources of explanation for the enormous diversity of approaches, over time, to rendering classic literary texts.